

STATES OF JERSEY



PROPOSED GOVERNMENT PLAN 2022 - 2025 (P.90/2021) :ELEVENTH AMENDMENT (P.90/2021 AMD.(11)) – COMMENTS

SCHOOL FUNDING

**Presented to the States on 9th December 2021
by the Council of Ministers**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Minister for Children and Education rejects this amendment on the grounds that:

- there is no evidence to support the amount requested
- the amount proposed is variable
- the amount proposed may prove to be unlimited, and
- that the consequences of making such an allocation are to limit the amount of General Reserve (Covid) which is available to the Government to react to the impact of Covid or other unforeseen events which may occur over the period of the Plan.

The Minister does not accept the concept of 'headroom' in budgeting for schools and colleges, and he is actively reviewing the adequacy and distribution of the relevant budgets under the Education Reform Programme.

The Jersey delivery model is different from that of its most comparable model, the funding of schools in England. Proportionately fewer costs are borne by schools' delegated budgets and more by central functions of Children, Young People, Education and Skills, or by other Departments of Government. The proposal for 15% as a proportion of total budget is not a recognised principle in the English schools' funding formula and would not reflect the different balance of central and delegated responsibilities in the Jersey system.

Examples are IT infrastructure and support which is provided by Modernisation and Digital or a significant proportion of spending on buildings maintenance which is provided by the Infrastructure Department.

Schools are allocated a total budget based on numbers of pupils and classes, weighted by age, and supplemented by additional budgets for deprivation (the Jersey Pupil Premium) and assessed need for those requiring specific support. Head Teachers have delegated accountability to allocate their base budgets between their staff commitments and their other non-pay demands, in general prioritising spending on staff and further limiting non-staff spending.

The Independent Schools Funding Review recognised that the formula required modernising to reflect changes in best practice. It recommended additional resources be allocated to address historical funding pressures, including non-pay pressures, and targeted growth for specific functions which were clearly funded below benchmarked levels. It also recommended that further work be undertaken in a number of policy areas, noting that this may result in identifying additional resource requirements in future years.

The Assembly approved growth funding for these issues in Government Plan 2021 to 2024 as in table 1 overleaf. The £5.5 million deficit funding equated to the overspends in schools and school direct support budgets in 2020.

The Department has set in train the Education Reform Programme to deliver the recommendations of the Independent Schools Funding Review and its wider service re-

design objectives. This work is underway, with the re-design of the Schools' Funding Formula project commencing in April with the aim of improving the transparency and fairness of the distribution of direct schools' funding and identifying the potential costs of future policy changes.

Table 1 – Investment agreed for the Education Reform Programme in Government Plan 2021 to 2024

Independent Schools Funding Review Recommendations ,2020 Delivery Ltd	2021	2022	2023	2024	4 year total up to 2024
Implement a radically simpler funding formula so all schools and colleges have transparent and equitable budgets and the funding system is flexible for the future	Design in project phase. No recurring costs identified				
Ensure that 16-18 technical education is appropriately funded for the future by levelling up per-student funding in technical education and implementing the post-16 education review	£300,000	£600,000	£600,000	£900,000	£2,400,000
Increase the funding available to schools and colleges to support students with the most significant Special Educational Needs (SEN)	£145,000	£372,000	£635,000	£656,000	£1,808,000
Make low prior attainment a significant factor in determining funding allocations, so schools can focus resources on enabling children who fall behind to catch up	£250,000	£430,000	£600,000	£896,000	£2,176,000
schools can focus resources on enabling children who fall behind to catch up	£60,000	£501,000	£501,000	£501,000	£1,563,000
Resolve system deficits through transitional grants to give space for schools for deficit reduction, linked to Curriculum Led Financial Planning reviews to ensure all money is spent to best benefit pupils	£5,500,000	£5,500,000	£5,500,000	£5,500,000	£22,000,000
Increase Jersey's school improvement capacity with a mandate to deliver clear outcomes on quality of teaching, as this is the most important longer-term driver of quality	£394,000	£1,345,000	£1,245,000	£1,345,000	£4,329,000
Sharing of provision and staff between schools and between schools and Highlands College to spread good practice and offer a broader curriculum within existing resources	£0	£147,000	£147,000	£147,000	£441,000
Uplift to Jersey Premium to support socio-economic equality in the education system	£291,000	£1,046,000	£1,046,000	£1,046,000	£3,429,000
Strengthen the central Educational Psychology team so all children have timely access to specialist help when they need it	£56,000	£168,000	£168,000	£168,000	£560,000
Support mental health and wellbeing through a whole school approach, backed by a targeted training programme delivered within schools	£83,000	£166,000	£200,000	£249,000	£698,000
Increase schools' financial freedom so they can hold reserves for future challenges and can allocate their budgets to maximise the quality of education for their students	Design in project phase. No recurring costs identified				
Strengthen school financial governance with the broader introduction of financiallyskilled governing bodies and the introduction of cluster-level school business managers	£117,000	£175,000	£175,000	£175,000	£642,000
Conduct "teach-ins" to ensure planners in schools understand the full funding mechanism and schools' freedoms and responsibilities	Design in project phase. No recurring costs identified				
Support Jersey Music Service to become a Trust while setting challenging requirements on participation rates by pupils from currently under-represented schools	Design in project phase. No recurring costs identified				
Ensure central services allocate resources in the way most beneficial to schools by giving Headteachers the leading role in their governance, and include Heads in the governance of the central school improvement function	Design in project phase. No recurring costs identified				
Programme design and implementation costs	£750,000	£750,000	£383,000	£0	£1,883,000
Total	£7,946,000	£11,200,000	£11,200,000	£11,583,000	£41,929,000

In addition, Members are reminded of appendices 3 and 4 to the draft Government Plan, whereby the previously agreed growth (under putting children first) of approximately £35 million per annum is demonstrated in greater detail. As well as including the figures above, this investment also includes an additional amount of approximately £10 million per annum of growth for investment into higher education and improving overall educational outcomes.

Appendix 3 identifies new growth proposed for 2022 onwards (approximately £1 million extra each year), and a further sum is held in central reserves for additional demographic pressures if required.

Accordingly, the Minister does not consider that further growth of £8.5 million per year is required at this time.

Financial Implications

The amendment as proposed creates an unlimited provision with the General Reserve (Covid), estimated at £8.5 million in 2022, reducing the Government's ability to react to unforeseen events, including the impact of Covid.

In total it increases expenditure by £25.5 million over the period of the Plan. If accepted this amendment will result in lower surpluses in 2023-2025 years of the plan, preventing them being available to be applied to reduce borrowing for Covid.

Statement under Standing Order 37A [Presentation of comment relating to a proposition]:

These comments were submitted to the States Greffe after the noon deadline as set out in Standing Order 37A due to time constraints from the States Meeting being moved forward to Monday 13th December, which in turn affected the final deadline for Comments, and the requirement to undertake final due diligence and review processes.
