

North Lanarkshire Council

Report

Education and Families Committee

approval noting

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Review of Curricular Arrangements in North Lanarkshire Schools

From Janie O'Neill, Head of Education (Central)

Email oneillja@northlan.gov.uk

Telephone 01236 812336

Executive Summary

A Review of Curriculum Arrangements in North Lanarkshire Schools (Appendix One), has been conducted by staff across Education and Families. North Lanarkshire children should benefit from coherent curriculum planning and high quality learning throughout all Education and Families establishments, ensuring the key entitlements of Curriculum for Excellence are delivered for all.

The review highlights:

- The significant evolution of curricular practice through the Scottish Attainment Challenge
- Innovations which have been progressed through the devolution of funding controls to schools through the Pupil Equity Fund
- The collaborative work being led by head teachers in improving curricular pathways in clusters and localities
- The developments led by head teachers in strategic curricular development forums (NIF Teams), as well as work led by senior central officers.

Lastly, this Curriculum Review in Education and Families is framed in response to the Employability Review which was concluded in March 2020, and, as such, aims to strengthen pathways in work based learning and progression routes to employment; packages of support for young people and partnerships to achieve success.

In the COVID19 recovery period, this work will underpin the North Lanarkshire digital offering to pupils and staff, reinforcing these examples of good practice.

Finally, the budget setting process in February 2020 established a year two saving around a 32 period week for North Lanarkshire secondary schools. This paper describes steps that will be taken to consult with stakeholders and progress implementation planning.

Recommendations

It is recommended the Education and Families Committee:

- (1) Note the planning so far for the realignment of Early Years, Primary and Secondary curricula in line with the planning in this paper; and

- (2) Approve the timeline for consultation with stakeholders regarding the implementation of the reconfigured 32 period week model, with a view to implementing in August 2021, as per the budget setting decision taken by Council in March 2020.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority Support all children and young people to realise their full potential

Ambition statement (6) Raise attainment and skills for learning, life, and work to enhance opportunities and choices

1.0 Background

- 1.1 This report was commissioned as part of the Plan for North Lanarkshire and follows on from the Employability Review which concluded in March 2019.
- 1.2 The report provides a summary of the current curricular offering to schools provided by North Lanarkshire Council, with consideration of how these support best practice in learning and teaching, curricular progression through stages and digitally enhanced learning.
- 1.3 It furthermore charts next steps in the evolution of the North Lanarkshire curriculum offering.
- 1.4 In the current climate, it should be noted that curricular delivery is subject to the national emergency (Covid-19). The Curriculum Review, in this context, has a special emphasis, in that it will underpin the digital offering to schools (pupils, parents and teachers) for the current phase and support the recovery process when it begins).
- 1.5 Importantly, the review situates the enhanced curriculum to ensure employability pathways are available to all young people during their schooling and that these pathways are informed by employer engagement and are 'demand led' in emphasis.
- 1.6 This is especially important to emphasise as the poverty related attainment gap experienced by young people (over a quarter of North Lanarkshire children live in poverty) comes from and reinforces an economic gap that will affect how their lives develop.
- 1.7 The review has been conducted in the context of budget planning within Education and Families, which has established a savings package which is dependent on the achievement of a number of programmes connected to the curriculum review.
- 1.8 Consequently, the report tees up the implementation of the four and a half day week in secondary from August 2021, assuming the national recovery period is concluded by that point.

2. Report

2.1 Raising Levels of Achievement

- 2.1.1 Education and Families staff have ambitions to significantly raise attainment through improving curricular arrangements. This includes a number of interventions which are designed to close the poverty related attainment gap.
- 2.1.2 Raising attainment, success in participating in programmes of personal achievement and leaving school to a positive destination are important barometers of success that will be used to measure our successes in future.
- 2.1.3 Sections 5 – 6 of the Report on the Review of Curricular Arrangements in North Lanarkshire Schools details important issues in this area.

2.2 Curriculum Making and Curriculum Leadership

- 2.2.1 Sections 5 – 7 of the report emphasise the importance of curriculum making by practitioners. This ensures that teachers are empowered to determine the best approaches to take to meeting the needs of learners they engage with and take cognisance of research based practice in so doing. They are confident in using national benchmarks for assessment to provide guidance to pupils regarding future work. And they benefit from the resources that are made available to support the curriculum by central officers.
- 2.2.2 Curriculum leadership is provided in schools by Head Teachers and other managers. Their career pathways have ensured that they have significant strengths in curriculum leadership, which is a feature of the professional standards by which head teachers are measured.
- 2.2.3 Curriculum leadership at local authority level is supported by a number of systems, including the Pedagogy Team and the NIF Strategy Groups, both of which involve practitioners collaborating.

2.3 North Lanarkshire Council Programmes and Approaches

- 2.3.1 North Lanarkshire Council has evolved a number of well established programmes and approaches, which have been designed over a number of years and underpin training and development programmes.
- 2.3.2 These programmes and approaches cover a wide range of curricular areas, underpin programmes of continuous professional learning and are exemplified by illustrative materials provided by key practitioners who have been seconded to undertake roles in central teams.
- 2.3.3 Sections 8 – 15 document these programmes and approaches for different curricular areas, all of which are governed by the entitlement architecture in Curriculum for Excellence.

2.4 Next Steps in the Curriculum Review

- 2.4.1 Sections 8 – 15 document these programmes and approaches for different curricular areas, all of which are governed by the entitlement architecture in Curriculum for Excellence.

- 2.4.2 The review thus far has sought to draw into one single framework a North Lanarkshire curricular offering which is of high quality, is based on research into highly effective practice and which can be disseminated across all establishments.
- 2.4.3 In the next phase it is expected that all schools will review their curriculum arrangements and also those of their clusters, so as to strengthen curricular planning. **A template is being established to facilitate this, based on Challenge Questions which are drawn from *How Good is Our School 4?***
- 2.4.4 The process for this is described in Section 17 of the report.

2.5 Implementing the 32 Period in Secondary

- 2.5.1 The four and a half day week is an important evolution of curricular arrangements in North Lanarkshire. It will facilitate an afternoon of personal achievement, with structured offerings open to pupils in the fields of Employability, Music and Arts, Outdoor Education and Leadership Development.
- 2.5.2 It should be seen as an opportunity to strengthen the offering to pupils and to enable a more structured personal development programme.
- 2.5.3 The model involves schools moving to a thirty two period curriculum model which will be planned between June and October 2020. The planning will be overseen by a Timetablers Network, led by an identified Head Teacher.
- 2.5.4 This process will ensure a review of curricular arrangements in secondary is conducted in such a way that locality planning is enhanced and effective arrangements are in place for all pupils.
- 2.5.5 A process of consulting with stakeholders will be undertaken in June 2020. This is to ensure that there is proper trade union engagement so as to strengthen proposals. This will include determining which day should be the half day in the week. It is hoped that the release of this time will help to support collegiate activity and address bureaucracy issues.
- 2.5.6 A process for consulting with parents will be conducted on a school by school basis in the new academic session, with a view to implementing new arrangements in August 2021. These processes will be led by head teachers, supported by senior officers.
- 2.5.7 Options processes for 2021 will be planned based on the updated curricular arrangements in schools. The enhanced curriculum offering will be embedded in new arrangements.
- 2.5.8 Naturally, such arrangements are subject to being affected by the COVID19 emergency and recovery periods, and concomitant planning for this.

3. Equality and Diversity

- 3.1 Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken in line with Council policy.

4. Implications

4.1 **Environmental Impact**

Increased use of digital technologies through the development of a digital curriculum will have a positive environmental impact in relation to reducing the production and printing of learning resources as the curriculum moves to an online and remote offering in the current climate.

4.2 **Financial Implications**

During the recent Council budget setting process a savings proposal linked to Curriculum Review was agreed and is scheduled for implementation from August 2021. The total savings value is £1.726m. The actions outlined above highlight how the Service could implement this proposal from August 2021. There is no impact on current year budgets.

4.3 **HR/Policy/Legislative Impact**

There is a requirement to consult stakeholders as part of the process of implementing new school week configurations, as well as a major piece of school by school reorganisation to be undertaken. There are plans in place to consult with stakeholders, including trade unions on the establishment of the 32 period week within this session, as per the timeline in appendix 2.

Following consultation with Trade Unions on the on-going curriculum review, plans will be drawn up to implement new arrangements. Depending on the outcome of this process, existing policies would be used to manage the affected staff group.

The model followed here will be the collegiate approach to planning with trade unions that was followed during the evolution of workforce planning for the 1140 hours expansion programme.

4.4 **Risk Impact**

The risks relating to the implementation of the 32 period week are being explored as part of consultation with school leaders and trade unions in relation to this policy being developed further.

While a risk assessment process has begun, the current COVID19 emergency period and its potential impact on the future planning for schools means the identification of risks (and importantly mitigations that may be available) remains fluid at this stage of policy development.

5. Measures of success

- 5.1 Improved utilisation of the digital curriculum by educators and learners.
- 5.2 Greater curricular coherence with stronger links to the labour market.
- 5.3 Improved outcomes for children and young people.

6. Supporting documents

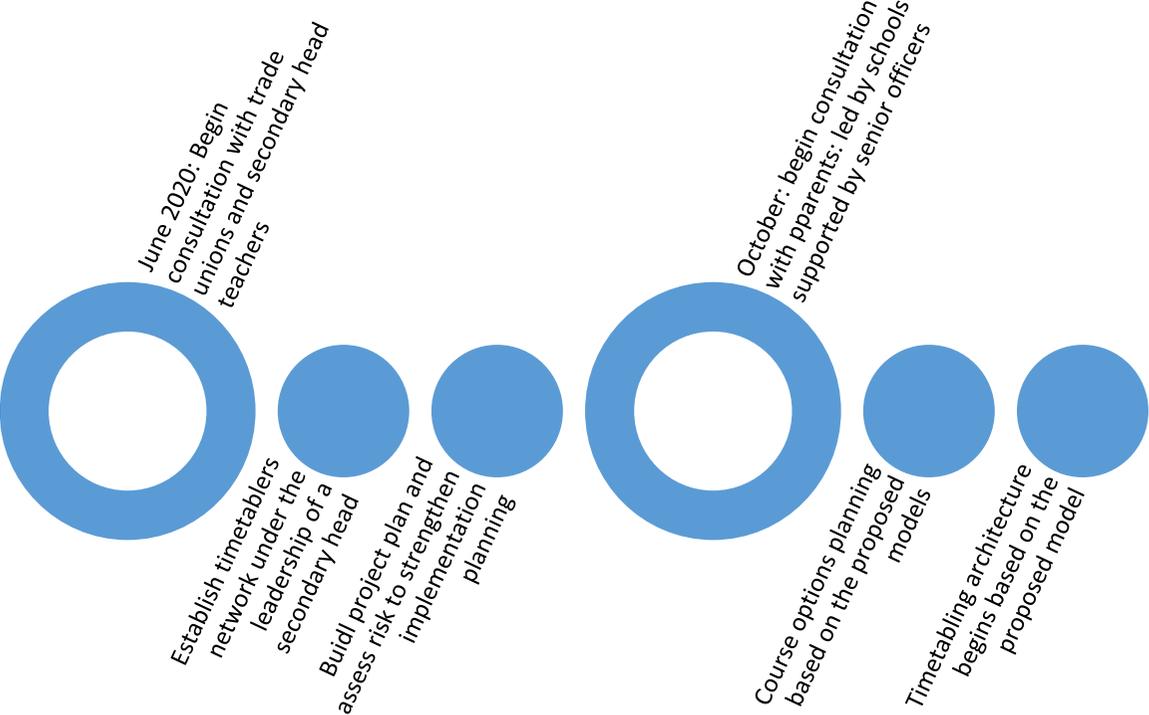
- 6.1 Appendix 1 – Review of Curriculum Arrangements in North Lanarkshire Schools
- 6.2 Appendix 2 – Timeline for Consultation for Implementation of the Thirty Two Period Week
- 6.3 Appendix 3 – NIF Strategy Groups Overview

Janie O'Neill

Janie O'Neill
Head of Education (Central)

Appendix Two

Timeline for Consultation on Implementing the Four and a Half Day Week Model of Curriculum



NIF Strategy Groups Overview

Education and Families Programme Plan: Assessment and Achievement	
Workstream	Descriptor
Raising Attainment Strategy	There is a commitment to improve data informed practice across the Directorate, to increase numbers of young people achieving national benchmarks.
<u>NIF Strategy Group 1:</u> Assessment and Moderation	<p>The Assessment and Moderation workstream have developed "<i>A practitioner's guide to Assessment and Moderation</i>" designed to support colleagues to make informed Assessment decisions about children's progress. Development work has focused on collaboration around the following areas-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Teacher professional judgement (based on a range of assessment tools), (ii) Quality assurance (iii) Reducing bureaucracy <p>The majority of schools now have an Assessment and Moderation leader and initial links have been made with Additional Support Needs (ASN) and Early Years (EY) settings. The SAC team have significantly supported this area, providing training and school based support.</p>
<u>NIF Strategy Group 2:</u> Tracking and Monitoring	This group have created an effective tracking and monitoring system that can be used to track progress and achievement from P1- S3. They are now looking to extend this programme to include EY and Senior phase; S4-S6. Group members continue to support schools with implementation and trialling through collaboration, training opportunities and creation of practitioner guides. The lead liaises regularly with SEEMIS staff to support the creation of a bespoke programme tailored to meet the needs of children and young people across North Lanarkshire. In the new session the team will conduct an audit to identify schools who are not yet using the system and offer them additional support etc.
Education and Families Programme Plan: Attainment and Achievement	
Workstream	Descriptor
DYW: Curricular Progression	A North Lanarkshire Approach to ensuring a coherent, progressive curricular experience in Literacy, Numeracy Health and Wellbeing and STEM will be established in all clusters.
DYW Strategy	The work ensures that the Universal: Enterprising Learning, Additional work based learning experience. Intensive Pathways programme
<u>NIF Strategy Group 3:</u> Pupil Entitlements	This group are developing an 'NLC Pupil Passport' which will enable children and young people to record bespoke NLC events, activities and experiences that they engage in as part of the Broad General Education. Young people will be able to have these wider achievements recognised through the 'Pupil Passport Badge' recognition awards.
<u>NIF Strategy Group 4:</u> Broad General Education (BGE)	This group have created an updated curriculum rationale for BGE. It centres around CFE principles and entitlements and provides an overarching view of structures and entitlements and links to what schools are referencing e.g. NLC plans, DYW etc. It was designed to be a practical tool containing 'I can statements' linked to skills/resources and activities S1-S3 showing progression and continuity. In light of current curriculum refresh this document serves as a useful self-evaluation tool for schools.
<u>NIF Group 5:</u> Senior Phase Experiences	This group have created a Practitioner's Guide to encourage schools' to reflect upon Senior Phase learning experiences to ensure the options available for our young people are creative, relevant and beneficial for

	<p>learners. It reflects the DYW agenda and builds upon, challenges and extends consortium arrangements. The team are continuing to look at accreditation for courses to maximise recognition for learning experiences (SQA). A sub group also looked at Curriculum Rationale for Senior phase and were due to present this to the SLT. This group's work links with work completed by NIF Group 4 - BGE.</p> <p>There is potential for more work in this area through making strategic links with employers and working closely with them to identify key skills and knowledge and creating bespoke learning/training experiences and pathways to allow pupils at the senior phases to develop appropriate skills etc. This is particularly pertinent with NLC industry growth rate – working with employers to build our own skilled workforce.</p>
<p><u>NIF Strategy Group 6:</u> Learning and Teaching</p>	<p>This group focused on improving learners experiences and outcomes by providing teaching staff with clear pedagogical principles that can be applied to all subjects and which have meaning and purpose. The group began by creating a Learning and Teaching Policy and Practitioner's Guide that could be used across NLC to improve consistency and quality. A similar guide is now required for Early Years to ensure continuity and progression.</p> <p>To further extend progress in this area, a new group could be formed, linking with SAC colleagues, to create our own bespoke 'Empowering Teachers' programme, focused on upskilling and empowering teachers to become experts in their craft. Teachers would collaborate as part of a bespoke group, benefitting from intensive development work in key areas, proven to improve attainment and outcomes for young people.</p>
<p><u>NIF Strategy Group 7:</u> Building Learning Power</p>	<p>This group are focusing on approaches that help children to become better learners. They are engaging in practitioner enquiry and action research to create a support pack for schools containing a wide range of advice/support, allowing schools to evaluate their practice and identify appropriate development pathways. Their work is supported by Psychological Services and will incorporate relevant research and professional reading.</p>
<p><u>NIF Strategy Group 8:</u> STEM</p>	<p>This group began by focusing primarily on Science - Early to Second level. Four sub groups were created with the following focus areas;</p> <p>Group 1 – Curriculum. This group is primarily led and coordinated by the SAC team.</p> <p>Group 2 – Professional learning; linking with partners; led and coordinated by SAC team.</p> <p>Group 3 - Equality - Women into STEM (links with LGBT.)</p> <p>Group 4 – Partnerships e.g. Education Scotland and SSERC.</p> <p>Further details of STEM work can be found in section 2.5.</p>
<p>Education and Families Programme Plan:</p>	
<p>Workstream</p>	<p>Descriptor</p>
<p>DYW - Digital Classroom</p>	<p>Young People Learn across schools through digital learning opportunities, provided by host schools through Virtual Learning Environments</p>
<p>NIF Strategy Group 9: Digital Learning</p>	<p>This group focused on developing a North Lanarkshire Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy, taking account of the impact of I.C.T. on attainment and engagement in learning, and on parental engagement in digital learning opportunities. Further information can be found in section 2.10.</p>
<p>Education and Families Programme Plan:</p>	
<p>Workstream</p>	<p>Descriptor</p>

Anti Poverty Programmes	There are a number of specific programmes devoted to ensuring North Lanarkshire is typified by a commitment to addressing barriers to achievement, due to poverty.
<u>NIF Strategy Group 10:</u> Family Learning	This group focused on reducing inequity and closing the attainment gap through developing more effective parental involvement in decision making, better communication and the removal of barriers to parental engagement. They are engaging in several case studies and are creating a guide to assist schools to further develop and measure the success of their own strategy for the engagement of parents and families, as partners.
<u>NIF Strategy Group 11:</u> Tackling Poverty	This group is newly formed and, due to changing staffing and current context, has been unable to formalize plans.