

STEP Update for the Deputy First Minister in advance of the meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

At our meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> January Mr. Swinney asked us to return with a demand analysis of STEP across Scotland.

In the last 6 weeks we have met with a large number of head teachers and authority representatives and the position currently stands at:

Number of Schools Expressing Desire for STEP	98	
Number of Authorities with Schools Expressing Desire for STEP	19	Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Argyll, Clackmannanshire, Dundee, East Ayrshire, East Renfrewshire, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Highlands, Midlothian, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire, Stirling, West Lothian
Number of Authorities Engaged	9	Clacks, Edinburgh, Glasgow, East Ayrshire, South Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, Midlothian, West Lothian, Stirling,
Authority/Cluster Meetings Upcoming	4	
Philanthropy Commitments	300 pupils in Aberdeen City	
Upcoming Philanthropy Meetings	2 further meetings for funding for 2 other authorities	Aberdeenshire and Dumfreiss & Galloway
Other Appointments		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sport Scotland</li> <li>• Edinburgh University</li> <li>• Children in Scotland Policy and Strategy Forum (with Gov Attainment Team)</li> </ul>

We have had an overwhelmingly positive response to STEP. It has been extremely insightful meeting with so many head teachers and gaining a deeper understanding of the challenges faced in their individual contexts. Their attraction to STEP is that it offers a holistic improvement opportunity for pupils.

We have also seen the first schools in Midlothian receive training and begin delivering STEP to their pupils with schools in South Ayrshire and Stirling starting at the beginning of next term.

We were invited to join the Children in Scotland Strategy and Policy Forum where [Redacted s.38(1)(b)] and [Redacted s.38(1)(b)] led excellent break out groups around working in partnership with schools.

**Since the release of Pupil Equity Funding it has however been a lot more challenging to engage with schools. For the large part authorities are advising schools not to engage with third sector organisations and schools are being asked to seek approval from their authority for new initiatives they would like to take up. Some schools are still struggling with a shortage of classroom assistants.**

Following on from our initial proposal we would make the following requests to the Deputy First Minister:

- That he agree to commission a research backed study of the STEP Programme and its impact on Scottish Primary School Attainment to begin in August 2017.
- That he considers providing some match funding for schools who do not have attainment challenge funds in order that they can take part in the study.
- That he visits one of the schools enrolled on the STEP Programme so that he can meet with staff and pupils taking part and gain an understanding of how it is delivered in primary schools.