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[Redacted s.38(1)(b)]
The Scottish
Parliament
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Dear [Redacted s.38(1)(b)],

Thank you for your letter dated 26 October about the STEP programme. I thought I would hold off replying until I saw the programme in action for myself.

Evidence shows high quality physical education, physical activity and sport have an important role to play in supporting the development of skills and competencies that are invaluable across the curriculum. We know physical activity has a positive impact on a pupil's health, educational attainment and life chances. By encouraging the development of both movement and thinking skills together, it contributes to, and reinforces, learning across the curriculum.

Education Scotland does not publicly endorse or reject any commercial education programmes. In regard to the Pupil Equity Funding, it is clearly understood that decisions about specific interventions should be made by headteachers based on the needs of children in individual schools. These choices should be based on a sound understanding of the effectiveness and impact of specific programmes. If there is any question about the efficacy of specific interventions, Education Scotland Attainment Advisers and other specialists can provide more in-depth advice and support. Any advice that is offered will be drawn from professional educational expertise.

I said in my response to [Redacted s.38(1)(b)] at the meeting of the Parliament on 3 October, that I want headteachers to be able to decide how to spend their Pupil Equity Funding. That is the purpose of the funding. The headteachers we engage with, and we engage extensively with them on the delivery of Pupil Equity Funding, want to have a reasonable amount of guidance on effective use of that funding, but they want to decide how to allocate those resources.

I have raised with local authorities, on a number of occasions, my dissatisfaction at the application of undue limitations to Pupil Equity Funding. I have no hesitation in reiterating my view that headteachers are the ones who should be the decision-makers on that point, within a framework of guidance that is designed to help, not hinder, them in their decision making.

I trust this is helpful.

Y. Swinney
John Swinney

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