

Budget impact on education

A deal with COSLA and an agreement with universities and colleges has protected teaching jobs and student places, despite the tough decisions that have had to be taken on spending, Education Secretary Michael Russell said today.

Watch the video

The majority of education spending is part of the local government settlement which is held by local authorities who are seeing a cut of just 2.6 per cent in their budget. The central education budget will reduce in revenue terms by 6.8 per cent while the capital budget falls by 28.9 per cent. A total reduction of £233.8 million produces a budget of £2583.6 million for 2011/12.

The savings, to be achieved primarily by cutting bureaucracy and tackling inefficiency, will enable teaching jobs to be protected by securing vacancies for the number of teachers finishing probation in 2011 and a further real reduction in longer term teacher unemployment as agreed with the COSLA leadership.

Protecting frontline services allowed the Scottish Government to:

- * agree with colleges and universities that the total number of student places will be protected
- * save the educational grants for school pupils (Educational Maintenance Allowances (EMAs)) which were cut south of the border
- * maintain pupil teacher ratios in P1 to P3 as part of agreement with COSLA
- * create a new Early Years and Early Intervention Fund, with start-up funding of £5 million
- * guarantee existing levels of living costs support for students in college and university

* protect the main research excellence grant for universities in cash terms

Other Budget priorities include providing £20 million for Scotland's Schools for the Future to maintain our commitment to building new schools across Scotland.

Education Secretary Michael Russell said:

"We have worked very hard with our partners in local government, further and higher education, the unions and public bodies to look at every possible way of making savings by targeting duplication, non-priority work and inefficiencies. This is where we have cut first to protect frontline education services and the money in students' pockets.

"The budgets for the Scottish Funding Council, Learning and Teaching Scotland, the Scottish Qualifications Authority and Skills Development Scotland have reduced but without detriment to access to higher or further education, the number of core university and college places, the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence or support for the unemployed.

"The agreement with COSLA on teacher employment is a significant achievement. The 2,800 probationary teachers leaving education training this year will have the same number of job opportunities available to them. More jobs will also be created so we can make a significant contribution to tackling longer term teacher unemployment.

"Equally, colleges and universities have agreed to preserve the same number of college and university places and the Scottish Government has ensured every student from school, college or university can access university based on the ability to learn and not the ability to pay.

"Tough decisions did have to be taken but we have worked with the sectors, local government and unions to secure spend in

priority areas to support economic growth.

“We remain committed to giving every child the best start in life, raising standards in teaching and learning, providing strong and better learning opportunities for school leavers, protecting access to education on the ability to learn and not the ability to pay, and supporting skills development that benefits current and future workforces.”

The reduction to the Education and Lifelong Learning budget is £233.8 million. The resource budget for the Education and Lifelong Learning portfolio will reduce by £168 million and capital budgets by £65.8 million.