

Thousands sign petition to stop school cuts

The EIS-led 'Save Our Schools' petition was presented to council leader Cammy Day this week

More than 3,000 people have called on Edinburgh Council to scrap cutbacks slated for the city's schools.

The petition, launched by the teaching union EIS, was handed over by Edinburgh EIS secretary Alison Murphy to the council leader Cammy Day.

Plans emerged recently to cut £8.2m from the authority's education budget – a move since delayed by at least a year after "one-off" funding was found.

Alison Murphy thanked the Labour council leader for ensuring there were "some protections for this year" as she handed over the petition, which was backed by 3,535 signatures, on Tuesday.

"That's great, but we will be back because at the moment they're postponed; we need these cuts not to happen at all," she said, adding: "The children of Edinburgh need our services – they need education spending to be protected."

Responding Cllr Day said: "We'll do everything we can to protect education, it's a priority for us and I know for other political parties – but we are the lowest funded council in Scotland and I'm sure you'll join us to lobby the Scottish Government to fund Edinburgh, as the capital city, fairer."

Ms Murphy told a council meeting last week that proceeding with the cuts next year could see "well over" 100 children unable to make a successful move from primary to secondary, with staff specialising in the transition among those who could be axed.

The council said while being “highly regarded as providing the bridge between cluster primary and secondary schools” the staff “are additional” and “cannot be protected when there are no other options available”

Speaking to the LDRS Ms Murphy said: “As the political parties finalise their budget proposals, ahead of next week’s council meeting, we hope they will listen to the teachers, parents and pupils of Edinburgh, who are clear that cutting the education budget will have devastating impacts on the children of our city.

“The long term costs of dealing with those impacts – costs in increased pupil drop out rates, in children’s needs not being met, in more staff absence as teachers buckle under the strain – will far outweigh any short term savings. We hope all councillors will heed the EIS’s cry to Save Our Schools.”



Finance convener Mandy Watt, Council leader Cammy Day, EIS secretary Alison Murphy. Image: EIS.