

Schools Forum

24th June 2014

Consortia funding 2014/15

This report relates to maintained schools and academies

Recommendation:

- That Schools' Forum notes the allocation of an additional £500,000 of Council funding for the Consortia in the academic year 2014/15.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The roles for Local Authorities, schools and other education providers envisaged by the present government are built upon a premise that improvement is the responsibility of every individual provider irrespective of status and, if it is to be self –sustaining, is best led by professionals within schools sharing expertise and supporting each other as they work together to improve educational provision.

1.2 The School Improvement Board and Consortia model was established in 2013/14 in order to promote the role of schools as autonomous leaders of school improvement and to develop the capacity for school to school support within Warwickshire. The Council agreed to provide funding to 'pump prime' the Consortia, with an expectation that, in the medium term, schools would re-direct funding currently identified for school improvement through the Consortia to develop a sustainable model.

1.3 Sarah Callaghan, Head of Learning and Achievement, made a commitment to further funding in the 2014/15 academic year. This commitment was confirmed and clarified by Claudia Wade, Interim Head of Learning and Achievement, at head teacher briefings; explaining that the Council would provide additional funding, but that this commitment was based on an expectation that Consortia would bid for funding against activities which addressed schools and the Council's priorities.

2.0 Vision and Priorities

2.1 The vision for Education and Learning, set out in the draft Education Strategy, is that every child and young person in Warwickshire will:

- Attend a good or outstanding school or setting;
- Achieve well whatever their starting point or circumstances; and

- Go on to positive destinations so that, as they become young adults, they are able to benefit from an independent economic and social life.

2.2 In order to achieve this vision, our priorities for 2014-2016 are:

- Increase the % of good and outstanding schools and settings;
- Improve progress in the Early Years and from KS1 – KS2 and KS2 – KS4;
- Narrow the gap in relation to performance of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups; and
- Ensure sufficient high quality places for learning.

3.0 Allocation of funding

3.1 The Council has identified and allocated the sum of £500,000 to support Consortia activity in the 2014/15 academic year.

3.2 Each Consortium will be able to bid for a total of up to £25,000 for either one project or a series of smaller projects. They will be required to:

- Identify priorities based on collective data
- Identify strategies to address the issues and improve performance
- Prepare a costed plan identifying the collective commitment of the schools to the plan (e.g. allocation of finance or human resources);
- Include measurable performance indicators and timescales / milestones; and
- Report progress of the projects to the School Improvement Board.

4.0 Application and Approval

4.1 Schools will be provided with a simple template for application; with a decision on each bid to be made by the relevant phase School Improvement Board.

5.0 Timescale

5.1 In order to ensure that schools can use up to date (i.e. 2014) data to identify their priorities, bids will need to be submitted by 30 September 2014. 60% of funding will be released immediately following approval; with the remaining 40% released following an evaluation of progress by the School Improvement Board.

5.2 Example Projects

1. A secondary Consortium identifies that the progress of students eligible for the pupil premium in mathematics is an issue across the Consortium. All schools across the Consortium wish to participate in a project to address this issue using Consortium and external expertise. The Consortium makes a single bid for £23,000 to meet consultancy costs and backfill for the internal expertise to be shared.

2. A primary consortium identifies that improving the quality of teaching from 'requires improvement' to good is a priority for most schools in the Consortium. Each of the schools participates in the project, but the greatest emphasis will be on the two schools which are judged to 'require improvement' overall. Some Ofsted trained consultancy support will be used, but most expertise will be provided by good and outstanding teachers from across the Consortium. The Consortium makes a bid for £20,000 for consultancy costs and supply cover.

3. A primary Consortium identifies that the progress of students with special educational needs in English is an issue in five schools. These schools wish to participate in a project to address this issue using Consortium and external expertise, including specialist support from one of the local special schools. A further group of six schools identify that they have a significant number of children across year groups eligible for the pupil premium who are on track to achieve Level 4 in English but not mathematics. The Consortium makes a bid for £13,000 for the first project and £12,000 for the second.

It is not expected that the funding will necessarily cover the full cost of the project. The application process will expect information about the contribution of member schools in terms of budget or expertise / staff time.

	Name	Contact Details
Report Author	Nigel Minns	nigelminns@warwickshire.gov.uk
Head of Service	Nigel Minns	nigelminns@warwickshire.gov.uk
Strategic Director	Wendy Fabbro	wendyfabbro@warwickshire.gov.uk
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Colin Hayfield	cllrhayfield@warwickshire.gov.uk