

## **An EIS Guide to Completing the CEC Budget survey to show you support the Save Our Schools Campaign**

Q1 – name and postcode and email address; tick you are happy being contacted about the survey

Q2 – are you currently employed by CEC?

Question 3 – where we can improve

- The ‘where’ is literal; it does not mean ‘what in general can we improve?’ – it means where geographically in the City can we improve a specific thing. This is therefore not a helpful question for the Save Our Schools campaign;
- If your area for improvement cannot be marked on a map, skip the Q.

Question 4. Please provide details of the area for improvement that is important to you. It is helpful for us to know why this is important to you and what effect the current situation has on you

Suggested answer if you support the EIS Save Our Schools Campaign:

Improving investment in Education is the area that is important to me. If additional investment in the service is unrealistic and ultimately not possible without Scottish Government support, then it is vital that NO further cuts to the Education budget are made, and there needs to be a cessation of built-in annual cuts to Devolved School Management (DSM) Budgets.

Cutting millions of pounds to schools will cause great harm to teaching, learning and wellbeing at a time when our teachers and support staff are:

- struggling to meet the Additional Support Needs of huge, and increasing, numbers of pupils;
- bearing the brunt on a daily basis of dysregulated pupil behaviour, such as violent and aggressive assaults;
- suffering enormously from workload stress and low morale.

Nationally, the proportion of pupils with an ASN has increased from 6.5% in 2009 to 37% in 2023. Here in Edinburgh this huge increase will be replicated. Those pupils need **more** to be invested in education, not less. But the same is also true of other pupils in their classes who may not have any ASN but whose learning is also affected because teachers are so over-stretched as they struggle to attend to those with the severest needs.

All pupils, but especially those with an ASN, require a lot of support as they move from primary to secondary education, and Edinburgh’s Transition Teachers have been doing a great job in providing that to them. And yet those roles are set to be victims of the proposed cuts. Their removal will add workload pressures to the teachers who will have to pick up on their duties.

Further cuts to DSM budgets, the exact details of which will be decided at individual school level, will erode all kinds of provision. Some Head Teachers may cut numbers of Pupil Support Assistants, again affecting pupils who most need the support of these vital school workers. Others will cut per capita department budgets in secondary schools, meaning that some courses especially in practical subjects cannot run or that basic essentials such as paper, pens and textbooks will be increasingly unavailable.

But most of all, further DSM cuts will mean fewer teachers in schools and an increase in temporary contracts. This will simply worsen the precarity of employment which has now become an endemic blight within Edinburgh's schools, especially our Primary schools. And this in turn will exacerbate the mental ill-health of our City's teachers.

Our youngest, or most recently qualified, Primary teachers – the vast majority of whom are women – are trapped on an endless annual treadmill of applications and interviews for temporary contracts in schools. They cannot get mortgages; they cannot start families; they are feeling devalued and disposable.

But teachers' precarity of employment is not just damaging for teachers: it is damaging for our young people, their wellbeing and their attainment. The quality of our children's learning can only be eroded as their teachers are endlessly extracted from their classrooms and shuttled around the City to and from different temporary posts. It is imperative that children have consistent adults in their lives who are committed to serving, and building lasting relationships with, them, their families and their communities.

All of this will only get worse if the proposed Education cuts go ahead.

Much is made of the fact that more is spent on Education than any other service in the Council, as if Education enjoys some kind of privileged status and that no service should be immune from cuts. I wholeheartedly disagree with this way of thinking. Education **should** be the service to receive the largest portion of the City's budget, and it most definitely **should** be immune from further cuts, and the key reason (beyond everything I have said above) for this is very simple: education is investment in the future. Teachers are tasked with challenges very few other workers face: the reversal of the effects of poverty on children and the equipping of the next generation with the knowledge and skills to combat the climate emergency. In other words, we are as integral and as vital as it gets when it comes to trying to ensure the social and environmental justice required to avert catastrophe.

You don't tell a group of workers with that level of responsibility that they've got to just accept more cuts to their staffing, time, resources, and security of employment but still to carry on with that vital mission, and not expect them to buckle. And teachers are exasperated, they're exhausted and they most certainly are buckling. According to the EIS, 73% say they feel stressed in their job frequently or all of the time, and recent FOI data this year from 27 local authorities reveals that the number of days lost to mental ill health rose by 57% between 2018-19 and 2022-23 among school staff.

Please – do NOT impose any further cuts to Education.

## 5. Where the Council has done well in the last year

Again, this is literal, asking you to mark on a map.

This is not a helpful question for the Save Our Schools campaign – complete as you see fit, or just skip.

6. Please provide details of where you think the Council has done well in the last year. It is helpful for us to know why this is important to you and what effect this has had on you.

Suggested answer if you support the EIS Save Our Schools Campaign:

The Council did well this past year to avoid making the planned cuts to Education. It's now time to make that a permanent state of affairs.

7. The Council has to save £143m from its annual budget by 2028/29. What ideas do you have for how the Council could save money?

You may just want to skip this, or you may well have ideas about things you feel the Council could do better. In terms of Save Our Schools, there some suggestions below as to what you might reference. However, CEC employees must not reference their individual school, nor share detailed information – instead, should talk in general terms about things you might have seen or experienced.

- Waste and inefficiency in procurement;
- The waste caused by poor ICT – maybe with a suggestion that CEC could bring more of the support work in-house, rather than paying huge amounts to CGI;
- Waste due to not being able to give pupils proper support early – thus problems build up, and far more, and far more expensive, support is needed later.

Most teachers will have seen other ways they think money is wasted in the council, so do give what examples you can, but without reference to where you work.

8. In order to save money, what service that you use or receive could the Council reduce or stop providing?

This is not a helpful question for the Save Our Schools campaign – complete as you see fit.

9. What area(s) do you think the Council needs to prioritise to improve services?

Education – see previous answer.

10. The Council has three priorities it is trying to achieve and three behaviours it expects all of its employees to show. More information about these is included in the fact bank below. What different or additional priorities or values do you think the Council should have?

Education is key to all these priorities - see previous answer; don't cut Education.

For all other questions – complete as you see fit.