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GOVERNANCE & RISK COMMITTEE

MANAGING RISKS TO EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

REPORT BY HEADS OF EDUCATION

A.   PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform the Governance and Risk Committee of the approach to managing risk ED014 – Failure to Achieve Target Progress and Attainment Levels.

B.   RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Governance and Risk Committee notes the approach taken to manage risk ED014 within Education Services.

C.   SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	**Council Values**	Being honest, open and accountable; making best use of our resources.
II	**Policy and Legal**	Education (Scotland) Act 1980 Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2014
III	**Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers**	None
IV	**Impact on performance and performance Indicators**	The achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels data is used to improve attainment, in line with the Council's Raising Attainment Strategy. Scottish Curriculum Qualification Framework (SCQF - Senior Phase) attainment is reflected in the key performance indicators of the service in line with the Council's Raising Attainment Strategy. Measures also form part of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework.
V	**Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement**	Achievement of CfE Levels provides performance information which will be used by schools and the authority to drive improvement as reflected in Single Outcome Agreement Performance Indicators.

	SCQF attainment is reflected in the performance indicators contained in the Single Outcome Agreement.
VI **Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)**	School Devolved Budgets/Pupil Equity Funding
VII **Consideration at PDSP**	N/A
VIII **Other consultations**	None

D.   TERMS OF REPORT

D1   Background

In response to the COVID 19 pandemic the Scottish Government took the decision to close all schools in March 2020. For the majority of children and young people in-school learning was replaced by remote learning. For vulnerable children and those with parents or carers employed as key workers, HUB facilities were established across the local authority. Schools reopened fully for in-school learning in August 2020. By December 2020, all exams were cancelled for Session 2020-21.

On 11 January 2021 there was a national move to a further period of remote learning for almost all pupils. Children with significant additional support needs or those with a high level of vulnerability were able to attend in-school learning.

The return to in-school learning began on 22 February for all P1 – P3 pupils and some Senior Phase pupils undertaking practical work. On 15 March all P4 – P7 pupils returned with secondary pupils returning on a blended basis. On 19 April 2021 all secondary pupils returned to schools.

All aspects of education recovery have regularly been reported to Education Executive and individual school improvement activities reported to Education Quality Assurance Committee.

D2   Risks

The COVID 19 pandemic and the resulting period of interrupted learning may contribute to learners not achieving their expected attainment levels. The West Lothian Raising Attainment Strategy provides a strategic focus to Education Services' activities in raising attainment. The Raising Attainment Strategy has four outcomes:

Raising Attainment for All in the Broad General Education (BGE) – Ensuring Excellence
Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap - Ensuring Equity
Raising Attainment for all in the Senior Phase – Ensuring Excellence
Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap in the Senior Phase – Ensuring Equity

D3   Control Measures

As a result of the impact of the pandemic on school education and the possible impact that interruptions may have on the progress and attainment of children and young people, the following responsive control measures have been put in place.

Initial Period of Remote Learning March – June 2020:

During the initial school closure period, West Lothian Council continued to provide the following key activities and deliver positive outcomes through engagement with school leaders and directly with teaching staff through virtual platforms:

- Curriculum Recovery Maps for Health and Wellbeing (HWB), Literacy and Numeracy were developed to guide and support schools in these key areas of the curriculum. The recovery maps support the delivery of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment, providing progression pathways, practical resources and relevant professional learning.
- High quality professional learning was provided to all teaching and support staff across the Council to develop confidence and share practice in using digital tools to support learning. West Lothian's priority for raising attainment and delivering positive outcomes for all learners continued to ensure the highest quality professional learning. This supported education staff to provide remote learning that delivers the core principles of Scotland's curriculum and the four fundamental capacities remain a priority for West Lothian schools. Through structured support, our schools are provided with latest national and local resource materials and collaborative opportunities that will provide necessary professional learning to ensure effective remote learning. Professional learning for staff has continued throughout Session 2020-21.
- Tracking of contact and support for vulnerable pupils was put in place.
- Detailed guidance was provided to ensure that all schools had a 2020/21 School Improvement and Recovery Phase Plan in place by June 2020. These plans were informed by national priorities and local, contextual data analysis of attainment and online learner engagement.
- Parent/carer information and support materials with a focus on wellbeing and supporting learning at home were created. As a result of the analysis of parent/carer surveys, key messages were shared with schools to consider for improving future online learning experiences.
- Initial tracking and monitoring of School Home Learning Engagement took place in May 2020. This gave an authority overview of the provision of home learning and the engagement taking place.
- Weekly briefing sessions were established with all headteachers across all sectors - Early Years, Primary, Secondary and ASN schools – these still continue.
- Significant investment in digital support for learners provided access to remote learning. All pupils who required devices were able to be accommodated between the purchase of 2095 additional devices and schools' own stock. Portable routers were also purchased and provided to identified families.

Return to School August – December 2020:

During the reopening of schools in August, West Lothian Council provided the following key activities to deliver positive outcomes:

- A central support and challenge model was developed which included 1:1 attainment meetings with link officers to analyse data and set clear and timeous actions; individual school meetings with the Performance Team to support understanding and interpretation of data; and bitesize professional development sessions at weekly Headteacher (HT) briefings.

- A digital focus since returning to school in August 2020 ensured that every teacher and learner in P4 –S6 had a level of confidence in using Microsoft 365 within Glow and Teams.
- West Lothian invested in an authority wide license of a digital application (SeeSaw) in response to feedback from parents to provide a tool for both in-school and remote learning for younger pupils, following the initial period of school closures. A strong focus was placed on ensuring all staff, pupils and parents/carers had a level of confidence in using SeeSaw.
- Further remote learning guidance was produced to support all schools with planning and preparation in case of further periods of remote learning. This led to an improvement in the remote learning offer during the next period ensuring that all learners have the opportunity to progress and extend their learning, interact and collaborate with their peers and work independently.
- Additional funding provided to schools for staffing and resources to target interventions to support learners.

Further Period of Remote Learning January – Easter 2021:

Key control measures during this phase included:

- An Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Remote Learning Framework was put in place to ensure a strong focus on children's health and wellbeing and high-quality learning, teaching and assessment through a play-based approach. This has ensured that each setting has analysed their tracking data, identified gaps and is providing daily experiences in literacy and numeracy to promote children's learning and development.
- Refinements to tracking and monitoring of learner engagement and progress in learning were established. In primaries, this captures an overview of learner engagement within literacy, numeracy and HWB. In secondaries, engagement was captured across the curriculum. In ASN schools, individual targets in relevant subject areas was captured.
- School learner engagement guidance was developed which provided clear standards and expectations of learning and teaching, assessment, feedback, and high-quality interactions. This ensured that schools could quickly identify the quality of learner engagement through remote learning and how to support all learners to reach their full potential.
- Experiences of remote learning through a survey to all learners and parents/carers attending primary and secondary schools was captured. The feedback provided was extremely positive in terms of the delivery of remote learning across schools identifying significant strengths due to the authority's strategic approach and consistent guidance issued to schools. Areas for consideration were identified which informed bitesize professional learning sessions.
- Guidance was developed with secondary schools regarding the SQA's Alternative Certification Model (ACM). This included regular engagement with the Head teachers, the Depute Headteacher curriculum network, Principal Teachers Curriculum and network leaders. The West Lothian approach was commended by Education Scotland following review. At all levels, staff were clear about their roles and responsibilities regarding delivery of the ACM and felt positive about the leadership and collaboration across the authority. Additional Inset days focussed on moderation of pupils' evidence to ensure that assessment meets the national standard.

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- Easter school, which supported learners in the Senior Phase, was delivered successfully in West Lothian via the national e-offer – West Lothian had the most unique user and course sign-ups in Scotland.

Full Return to School April – June 2021:

On return to school, control measures continue to be put in place:

- Weekly meetings with schools to ensure a robust understanding of expectations and attainment targets and standards.
- Work with schools to inform their own contextual analysis – in order that they can clearly identify any gaps in learning and match improvement activities accordingly
- Continual review of data in the Senior Phase in preparation for provisional results at the end of June.
- Regular high-quality interactive learning and teaching using technology or other remote methods ensure a balance of live learning and independent activity. It also provides access to key learning which is available for learners to revisit as often as necessary.
- Additional funding has been devolved to schools to provide resources and interventions clearly identified as a result of each school's contextual analysis. Primary Nurturing Schools Leads have been allocated across all primary schools. The funding will focus on supporting the wellbeing of children through the development of the nurturing school's approach.
- Secondary Nurture additional funding has provided the opportunity for schools to look at various options of either nurture, targeted home support or literacy and numeracy recovery through support for learning.
- Additional staffing, following confirmation of Scottish Government funding, has been targeted to deliver future recovery interventions. As part of this funding, a focused Equity Team will focus on driving forward the key recommendations arising from the Equity Audit January 2021. This team will clearly define how West Lothian Council Education Services is reflecting on, recovering from and planning future renewal as it emerges from the pandemic.
- Additional support is being provided for new student teachers and probationers to ensure the highest quality of learning and teaching moving forward.

E. CONCLUSION

Education Services has implemented measures to mitigate against identified risks and will continue to analyse data as it emerges to ensure further interventions are deployed and the impact of the identified risks are minimised.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

West Lothian Raising Attainment Strategy (2018/19-2022/23)
https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/21374/WORKING2018-05-04-Latest-Draft-Raising-Attainment-Strategy/pdf/WORKING2018-05-04_Latest_Draft_Raising_Attainment_Strategy.pdf
Education Scotland Equity Audit (January 2021)
https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/impact-assessment/2021/01/equity-audit-deepening-understanding-impact-covid-19-school-building-closures-children-socio-economically-disadvantaged-backgrounds-setting-clear-areas-focus-accelerating-recovery/documents/equity-audit/equity-audit/govscot%3Adocument/equity-audit.pdf

Appendices/Attachments:

Risk ED014: Failure to achieve target progress and attainment levels for young people

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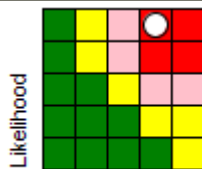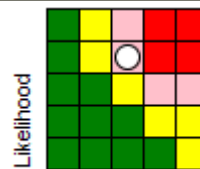
Date of meeting: 14 June 2021

Appendix: Risk ED014

Report Author: Kenneth Ribbons
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Report Layout: 11 (previously R09b) Original Score, Current Score, Internal Controls with linked Actions

⚠	**ED014 Failure to achieve target progress and attainment levels for young people**	Failure of processes in place, amplified by the impact of Covid and the resultant control measures including school closures, leading to failure to achieve target progress and attainment levels for young people, and resulting in reputational damage to the council.
	Current Controls:	Raising attainment strategies in place. Monitoring through the central Quality Improvement Team and Performance Team with updates to the Head of Service and Depute Chief Executives. Regular tracking and monitoring of attainment for children and young people across all schools from early level to senior phase. High quality professional learning was provided to all teaching and support staff across the Council to develop confidence and share practice in using digital tools to support learning. Devices distributed to pupils to access on line learning during remote learning periods. Quality Improvement Officers, working in partnership with school based staff, developed robust recovery curriculum maps for Health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy to support all schools from August 2020 onwards. Quality Improvement Officers, working in partnership with school based staff, developed high quality learning, teaching and assessment approaches leading to continued progression in learning during periods of school closures. Monitoring of learner engagement across all schools during remote learning periods. Parent/carer information and support materials with a focus on wellbeing and supporting learning at home created and shared.

Risk Score	Original Risk Matrix	Risk Score	Current Risk Matrix	Linked	Risk Actions	Original Due Date	Due Date	Progress	Description
20		12		✅	ED20009_Ar Support and challenge meetings introduced for all schools on one to one basis	30-Jun-2021	30-Jun-2021	100%	Quality Improvement Officers have established an updated model for support and challenge meetings. One to one meetings have a focus on identified gaps and interventions to support along with data prepared by the service Performance Team.

		✅	ED20010_Ar Develop and implement authority wide guidance for the SQA Alternative Certification Model	30-Jun-2021	30-Jun-2021	100%	Quality Improvement Officers have developed an approach to support understanding of SQA standards leading to robust evidence gathering and teacher confidence as required by SQA's alternative certification model.
		✅	ED20008_Ar To Establish a Strategic Equity Team to support schools	30-Apr-2021	30-Apr-2021	100%	Following publication of national Equity Impact Report, specific strategic post holders will work with officers and schools to deliver the required recommendations and actions from April 2021.