

STEP Update for the Deputy First Minister in advance of the meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

At our meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> January Mr. Swinney asked us to return with a demand analysis of STEP across Scotland.

In the last 6 weeks we have met with a large number of head teachers and authority representatives and the position currently stands at:

Number of Schools Expressing Desire for STEP	98	
Number of Authorities with Schools Expressing Desire for STEP	19	Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Argyll, Clackmannanshire, Dundee, East Ayrshire, East Renfrewshire, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Highlands, Midlothian, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire, Stirling, West Lothian
Number of Authorities Engaged	9	Clacks, Edinburgh, Glasgow, East Ayrshire, South Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, Midlothian, West Lothian, Stirling,
Authority/Cluster Meetings Upcoming	4	
Philanthropy Commitments	300 pupils in Aberdeen City	
Upcoming Philanthropy Meetings	2 further meetings for funding for 2 other authorities	Aberdeenshire and Dumfreiss & Galloway
Other Appointments		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sport Scotland</li> <li>• Edinburgh University</li> <li>• Children in Scotland Policy and Strategy Forum (with Gov Attainment Team)</li> </ul>

We have had an overwhelmingly positive response to STEP. It has been extremely insightful meeting with so many head teachers and gaining a deeper understanding of the challenges faced in their individual contexts. Their attraction to STEP is that it offers a holistic improvement opportunity for pupils.

We have also seen the first schools in Midlothian receive training and begin delivering STEP to their pupils with schools in South Ayrshire and Stirling starting at the beginning of next term.

We were invited to join the Children in Scotland Strategy and Policy Forum where [Redacted s.38(1)(b)] and [Redacted s.38(1)(b)] led excellent break out groups around working in partnership with schools.

**Since the release of Pupil Equity Funding it has however been a lot more challenging to engage with schools. For the large part authorities are advising schools not to engage with third sector organisations and schools are being asked to seek approval from their authority for new initiatives they would like to take up. Some schools are still struggling with a shortage of classroom assistants.**

Following on from our initial proposal we would make the following requests to the Deputy First Minister:

- That he agree to commission a research backed study of the STEP Programme and its impact on Scottish Primary School Attainment to begin in August 2017.
- That he considers providing some match funding for schools who do not have attainment challenge funds in order that they can take part in the study.
- That he visits one of the schools enrolled on the STEP Programme so that he can meet with staff and pupils taking part and gain an understanding of how it is delivered in primary schools.

## **WHAT IS STEP?**

STEP is a school based, personalised, physical literacy programme that is accessed online and involves a pupil undertaking 2 short exercise sessions at the start and end of the school day. These sessions last up to 10 minutes and the exercises are based around the three core skills of balance, eye-tracking and coordination. STEP is typically overseen by classroom assistants who supervise pupils on a rotation basis but can be delivered by any properly trained resource.

## **WHAT DOES STEP DO?**

STEP is based on repetitive exercises which allows children to embed core physical functions. There is a high correlation between poor physical literacy and low attainment. By working through the Programme pupils improve their automatic physical capabilities, resilience, self-confidence and in turn improve their capacity to learn. The way that the Programme is constructed allows for holistic improvements in each pupil across academic attainment, wellbeing, physical ability and emotional functioning.

Example:

*Jack, an 8 year old boy, struggles to sit still in the classroom. He knows he is supposed to and tries very hard to. Jack spends a lot of time thinking about sitting still, his cognitive focus being on the physical task, which means he has very little capacity left for listening to the teacher, processing, learning and retaining what is going on during the lesson. He is falling further behind his peers and doesn't think he is any good at school. He takes part in additional small group work for reading, numeracy and spelling but he doesn't enjoy doing extra work. He stops trying to behave in the classroom and instead deploys avoidance strategies, looking for ways to avoid trying academic tasks that he believes he will fail at. Jack's teacher believes he is intellectually capable and that he has the potential to achieve more.*

*Jack's school enrolls him on STEP. He enjoys the one-to-one time with the classroom assistant and thinks it is great to spend a bit of time doing a physical activity outside the classroom. He really enjoys seeing the progress dial move up when he masters a skill level. As Jack progresses his teachers notice that he can sit still for longer. Jack starts finding it easier to concentrate in the classroom and apply himself to activities. He finds his schoolwork is improving and this further encourages him to try harder. He starts to enjoy being in the classroom and participates in discussions keeping pace with his peers.*

## **A DIRECT LINK TO ACADEMIC ATTAINMENT**

Currently, education focuses on improving educational outcomes via subject interventions such as more reading practise or alternative ways of learning numeracy. These strategies have varying degrees of success and are resource heavy. For pupils who are disengaged from learning, the idea of spending time doing more reading, writing or maths is not appealing. Adopting a different approach, and addressing underlying physical abilities enhances the capacity for learning which is why 75% of

underachieving pupils move up to expected attainment by the end of the Programme. The most recent pilot study produced the following results:

Reading	Maths	English Comprehension	Spelling
86% of pupils moved to on or above target by the end of the Programme	70% of pupils moved to on or above target by the end of the Programme	75% of pupils moved to on or above target by the end of the Programme	62% of pupils moved to on or above target by the end of the Programme
56% of the control group moved to on or above target during this time	30% of the control group moved to on or above target during this time	43% of the control group moved to on or above target during this time	30% of the control group moved to on or above target during this time

### WHY DOES STEP HAVE MORE IMPACT THAN OTHER PROGRAMMES?

The main reason that STEP creates such positive outcomes is that it is a genuinely personalised programme. The supporting software generates different exercises for each child, based on their individual capabilities. Children learn physical skills at their own pace, just as they do academic skills. The supervising staff member records their performance at each session so the program knows when a skill has been embedded. STEP is designed to challenge them at an individually appropriate level, teaching them that persisting at something gives results and building resilience. Pupils engage readily with STEP as it is different from usual learning activities and the range of reward and motivational resources supplied enables them to feel success at an ongoing rate. The development of self-belief is a critical component in a pupil's success. The increased physical control gained leads to better self-awareness, emotional control and overall feelings of wellbeing, reported by staff and pupils alike:

Improved Pupil Ability to Achieve	Improvement in Self Confidence
94% of pupils felt their ability to focus and concentrate has improved and school work has become easier	81% of teachers report positive changes in pupils, particularly in the areas of self-confidence, coordination and emotional functioning

### WHO IS STEP FOR?

Almost any pupil could benefit from the STEP Programme but the greatest impact is seen by those pupils in the lower quintile of the classroom, particularly the ones whose academic attainment is not commensurate with their ability. The optimum age for pupils to begin STEP is in P4/P5 so that they can benefit from improved learning whilst still in primary education before the attainment gap widens further when they enter secondary learning.

### IS STEP PE?

Whilst pupils on the STEP Programme benefit from an extra 100 minutes of physical activity each week it is not a class PE Programme and cannot be compared to initiatives such as the Daily Mile. Many children who are physically active still struggle

to achieve academically. STEP supports all initiatives that improve pupil fitness and activity but the STEP focus is on the development of fundamental physical capabilities that should be automatic such as standing still, tying shoelaces, riding a bike or following words on a page.

### **IS STEP AN ADDITIONAL NEEDS INTERVENTION?**

STEP has benefited many children with a learning difficulty diagnosis but it is not an Additional Educational Needs programme. Some schools have elected to adopt the Programme across the breadth of the classroom due to the holistic benefits gained by participants in addition to academic gain.

### **MEASURING IMPACT**

STEP provides impact reports throughout the Programme that demonstrate pupil progress physically, academically and emotionally. These reports can also be produced to demonstrate impact within a school, authority or nationally.

### **HOW DOES STEP FIT WITHIN SCOTTISH EDUCATION?**

It is our belief that STEP compliments the strategies the Government has adopted to see improvement in Scottish Education and could make a fundamental difference in supporting the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

### **The National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan**

*“We need Scottish education to deliver both **excellence** in terms of ensuring children and young people acquire a broad range of skills and capacities at the highest levels, whilst also delivering **equity** so that every child and young person should thrive and have the best opportunity to succeed regardless of their social circumstances or additional needs.”* John Swinney

*Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy* – Studies have shown that pupils who complete the STEP Programme show significant improvement in their academic outcomes, particularly in numeracy and literacy.

*Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children* -STEP has been trialled in all possible school settings from elite independent schools in the UK to state primary schools in areas of deprivation in the US. The impact of STEP on a pupil is not affected by socio-economic background which further supports the Government’s desire to see equity in education. An independently evaluated pilot programme in Scotland would demonstrate the extent to which STEP has the ability to make a significant dent on the attainment gap with results being delivered within 2 years.

*Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing* – Pupils on the Programme become accustomed to completing daily exercise sessions, embedding a healthy mindset towards fitness. The improvements in pupil wellbeing are as significant as the academic improvements.

### **The Curriculum for Excellence**

One purpose of the Curriculum for Excellence is to *put the learner at the centre of the curriculum*. STEP is the only learning enhancement strategy that is truly personalised

using technology enhancements to deliver a programme that adapts to the ever-changing needs of the pupils. With an “*entitlement to receive personal support to enable them to gain as much as possible from the opportunities that the Curriculum for Excellence can provide*”, it seems logical that this should include personal support to develop the physical skills needed to allow pupils to become better learners.

When considering Learning and Teaching within the Curriculum STEP compliments all the criteria suggested for a quality offering:

- Engaging and active
- Setting challenging goals
- Shared expectations and standards
- Timely, accurate feedback
- Learning intentions, success criteria, personal learning planning
- Collaborative
- Reflecting the ways different learners progress

Of the four capacities highlighted in the Curriculum framework and attributes that Scottish education desires to cultivate in its students STEP directly impacts on three of these:

- Successful learners
- Confident individuals
- Effective contributors

### **Personal Learning Plan**

The bespoke nature of STEP means that it can form a fundamental and valid part of a pupil’s personal learning plan.

### **Parental Engagement**

Some pupils do not have the advantage of support in their learning from parents or caregivers and STEP has been designed to allow all pupils enrolled to succeed without the need for parental involvement. However, it can be a useful tool for encouraging parental engagement, a parent pack is provided to explain what the pupil will be involved in and what the expected outcomes are. For those who want to contribute positively there are home based activities to continue through the holidays. Early indications from data captured in the US would suggest that pupils involved in STEP do not show the same regression in their reading levels after a school holiday that are frequently identified when there is no educational stimulation at home.

### **Education Scotland Benchmarks for Literacy and English, Numeracy and Maths**

The guidelines emphasise the need for pupil engagement to allow the educational benchmarks to be met. Many pupils in the bottom 20% of the classroom are not engaged with their schoolwork and are trapped in failure cycles. By completing the STEP Programme, these young learners do reengage with their classroom learning and the improvement on their literacy, English comprehension and numeracy has been empirically evidenced.

## **GIRFEC**

With an obligation to address the needs of every child in Scotland, including STEP in a child's education plan to address the fundamental physical skills some children are lacking, would show commitment by the Government to consider all opportunities available to help improve a child's outcome.

## **An effective use of Classroom Assistants**

There has been much debate over the value and effectiveness of classroom assistants within schools.<sup>i</sup> Unlike academic learning programmes that need to be delivered by a qualified teacher, STEP can be overseen by appropriately trained classroom assistants. The relationship between a struggling learner and a classroom assistant is often strong due to the amount of time spent together. STEP gives a constructive purpose to this time, directly improving learning outcomes. The benefits of improved behaviour of STEP pupils within the classroom extends to the whole class and allows classroom assistants to have a greater impact on supporting the academic development of those in need.

## **Active Schools**

An alternative delivery model could see the Active Schools Coordinator in each authority working with a group of trained activity coaches to deliver the STEP Programme within school hours.

## **WHO HAS STEP CONSULTED WITH?**

[Redacted s.38(1)(b)]

## **The STEP TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMME**

The STEP Teacher Training Programme has been developed by [Redacted s.38(1)(b)], [Redacted s.38(1)(b)], recognised by GTCS to deliver teacher training in Scotland. It encompasses training for a Head Teacher, STEP Lead and classroom assistants or PE coaches. Following a very constructive meeting with SCEL we are preparing to submit the STEP Training Programme to their panel for endorsement consideration.

In Scotland we will be working with Glasgow Kelvin College who will deliver STEP Training in school clusters and monitor the Quality Assurance aspects of delivery.

## **[Redacted s.38(1)(b)] AND STEP**

As a result of his own experiences struggling to achieve at school, and, having seen the impact the STEP Programme had on his children, [Redacted s.38(1)(b)] is passionately committed to seeing all children in Scotland who could derive a benefit obtain access to STEP. He is personally mentoring the first pupils enrolling this term and has obtained commitment from other Scottish international sports stars to act as Physical Literacy Ambassadors in Scottish primary schools.

## A STEP CHANGE FOR SCOTLAND: OUR PROPOSAL

### Recognising STEP

We would ask that the Deputy First Minister makes a commitment to schools that signing up to the STEP Programme would be a legitimate use of Scottish Attainment Challenge Money. We ask Mr Swinney to give his support of the STEP Programme as an approved attainment strategy.

### A Scottish Pilot Study

We believe that the Government should consider including personalised physical literacy in the primary curriculum. In order to make this decision we would ask the Deputy First Minister to commission a Scottish Pilot to assess the impact of the STEP Programme on Primary 4 and Primary 5 pupils across a number of councils in the country. It is believed that a decision to do this would receive support from all the parties. The Pilot would commence in August 2017 and run for 2 academic years.

### Research and Reporting

It is suggested that the First Minister commissions the Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change to independently document and report on the impact of the Programme. We have been in communication with [Redacted s.38(1)(b)], a Senior Researcher who has experience in assessing the impact of physical activity on education and the impact of technology enhancement in education. We are meeting with the department on 24<sup>th</sup> January.

Our suggestion is, that the research considers the impact of STEP on the areas of:

- Academic Attainment (Numeracy, Reading, Comprehension and Spelling)
- Pupil Attendance
- Pupil Wellbeing

As part of the Programme, STEP provides impact reports at 8, 16 and 24 months which, when verified could be presented to the Government to assess the success of the study. A final report and recommendations would be presented to the Government at the end of the Pilot.

STEP has received interest from, and is in discussion with, schools and councils across Scotland and thus proposes the Pilot would consist of the following:

	<b>Number of Schools</b>	<b>Number of Pupils</b>
Midlothian	25	250
East Ayrshire	40	400
Dundee	35	350
Glasgow	100	1000
Renfrewshire	40	400
Edinburgh	50	500
<b>Total</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>2900</b>

Whilst low attainment and socio-economic background have a high correlation, poor performance in the classroom is not limited to children with a social disadvantage and in our view an impact study should also include pupils who are outside the attainment challenge areas.

### **A Collaborative Working Party**

We would ask the First Minister to form a working party comprised of representatives from his own team, Education Scotland, the Learning Directorate, STEP and the Councils to construct the Pilot and agree an implementation plan. STEP can work with each council to ensure that the delivery model is suitable for their schools' needs.

<b>Timeline</b>	
February 2017	Working Party Formed
March 2017	Working Party Agrees Research Proposal and Commissions Pilot
April 2017	Schools Identified
May 2017	School Implementation Plans Agreed
June 2017	Teacher Training Delivered
August 2017	Pupils begin STEP Programme
April 2018	First Impact Reports Presented
December 2018	Second Impact Reports Presented
July 2019	Final Impact Report Presented
September 2019	Pilot Research Trial Full Report Published
December 2019	Working Party Meets to Evaluate Pilot

### **Budget Proposal**

An outline of budget requirements for the 2 year project is in the accompanying spreadsheet and summarised here:

Programme Fees	£2,117,000
Training Costs	£43,500
Equipment	£17,400
Research Commission	£90,000
Total excluding Teaching Resource	£2,267,900

It is proposed that the funding for the Pilot come from the allowance those councils involved would receive from their Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity allocation. We would ask the Deputy First Minister to set aside the necessary resource required to enable the two non-Attainment Challenge councils to take part.

We are looking forward to meeting with the Deputy First Minister on 25<sup>th</sup> January to discuss this proposal further and seek his feedback.

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<sup>1</sup>[Redacted s.38(1)(b)], Institute of Education *Challenging the Role and Deployment of Teaching Assistants in Mainstream Schools (EDTA Project), 2011*

The Scottish Government (2010) Teacher census, supplementary data 2010

## PS Minute

### ADVICE FOR: JOHN SWINNEY

Document 26 – PS Minute for case 2016/0038100

<b>MACCS Case Number:</b>	2016/0038100	<b>Respond by:</b> <b>14 December 2016</b> <b>however see date below.</b>	
<b>Correspondent/Organisation:</b>	[Redacted s.38(1)(b)], [Redacted s.38(1)(b)], STEP Physical Literacy Programme		
<b>Date and time of Event:</b>	Date is flexible during week of 28 November 2016		
<b>Location of Event:</b>	Edinburgh, Parliament or St Andrew's House.		
<b>Overview of invitation and audience profile:</b>	Two representatives from the STEP Programme including [Redacted s.38(1)(b)], to discuss their initiative to support children to become physically literate.		
<b>Has the Minister been asked to attend of behalf of FM?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>	Decline.		
	<p><b>Comments:</b></p> <p>The STEP physical literacy programme is a programme of exercises performed twice a day for 10 minutes. The STEP view is that children who take part learn more efficiently, socialise more easily and participate more positively both inside and outside the classroom. STEP is used as a special educational needs intervention in over 150 schools across the UK and US.</p> <p>It is likely any meeting will seek to gain support for the STEP programme to be adopted in schools in Scotland. A meeting is not likely to offer DFM significant value unless he has a particular interest in exploring this programme.</p> <p>Schools currently make time for PE and for daily physical activity, such as the Daily Mile. Along with the Daily Mile and STEP programme, there are many other examples of how physical activity can be embedded into the daily life of a school that can be explored.</p> <p>[Redacted s.30(b)(i) and s.30(b)(ii)].</p> <p>The Scottish Government has invested over £10m in physical education (PE) over the last four years. Education Scotland believes we have sufficient expertise in PE to develop physical literacy, which is part of the aim of PE, at no cost.</p> <p>However it would be for individual local authorities to</p>		

## PS Minute

	<p>decide whether they would wish to incur these costs based on their local needs and priorities.</p> <p>If recommendation is to accept, has this advice been agreed with your Head of Division? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	
<b>Has another Minister been asked to attend:</b>	No.	
<b>Main theme that the event supports:</b>	Health and wellbeing in the Scottish curriculum.	
<b>Main purpose of attending:</b> <i>(Tick as many as apply)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain new policy or a major policy shift <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Reinforce or illustrate existing policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Improve relations with stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Encourage participation in consultation <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Recognise contribution to policy implementation <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Announce funding <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Other (please specify): <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>	
<b>Main message to communicate:</b>	<p>Quality physical education provides children and young people with the fundamental competences and skills necessary for lifelong participation in sport and physical activity, and is a key part of our Sports Strategy for Children and Young People.</p> <p>Physical education has a positive impact on a pupil's health, educational attainment and life chances. It encourages the development of both movement and thinking skills together and in doing so, contributes to, and reinforces learning across the curriculum. It is for local authorities and schools to decide how to deliver the curriculum based on local needs and circumstances.</p> <p>98% of primary and secondary schools across Scotland continue to provide at least two hours or two periods of PE, which demonstrates remarkable progress since 2004/05 when only 10% of schools were meeting this target. In addition, over 800 primary schools across the country are participating in the Daily Mile programme, adapting the basic idea to meet their own circumstances.</p>	
<b>Most appropriate type of Ministerial input:</b>	Meeting.	
<b>Private Office view:</b>	Diary could be free for a possible meeting.	
	Private Office contact:	[Redacted s.38(1)(b)]
<b>Communications Office view:</b>	Comments:	No view sought.
	Communications Office contact:	
<b>Action Officer:</b>	[Redacted s.38(1)(b)] [Redacted s.38(1)(b)]	