

Bidding for resources

Issue

Schools should be sufficiently funded in an equitable manner that does not require school leaders to take time from their core business of leading learning and teaching to complete bids for core resources and services.

Headline position

Effective participation in the bidding arena has become the required vehicle for securing necessary additional funds to maintain and develop education.

Any aspect of the life of a school which might be subject to an Education Scotland inspection process should not require to be funded through a bidding process. Schools should not need to bid for essential support for pupils or for services such as educational psychology.

AHDS calls for an immediate end to the current bidding system which is inequitable, inappropriate and against the principles of Delegated Resource Management and best value. It diverts management time from more essential tasks.

Full position

The bidding process invalidates schools self-evaluation, development planning and devolved management.

Schools must be allowed to identify priorities and allocate their full budgets accordingly. Funding should be transparent, equitable and sufficient to support learning and teaching and the efficient management of the school.

This is proving impossible under the current financial climate of LA cutbacks and time limited, ring-fenced allocations with strict criteria and adds to an already onerous workload.

Further concerns:

- Some Local Authorities now employ “experts” to assist schools in completing bid forms, ensuring key words and phrases are incorporated to guarantee success.
- Success is often dependent on who you know rather than what you do
- Schools have to create artificial links to meet the criteria to secure the funding; this does not represent best value or best practice.
- The procedure is time consuming and complicated and detracts for the capacity to meet core requirements
- Funding becomes unavailable due to workload commitments
- Further to the paperwork involved in the bid, is the requirement to submit a report and audit trail to demonstrate that the monies have been spent as indicated. Confirmation can be easily checked by HMIE and the school audit process

If A Curriculum for Excellence is to be flexible and meet the needs of schools as identified by pupils, staff and parents through the school’s improvement planning process, then budgets too must be establishment specific and not driven by external factors. If the money has been identified as available for education and schools then it is in the best interest of all stakeholders that bidding systems are ended and the money distributed on a fair and equitable basis.