

FROM THE MINISTER/ÓN AIRE



AN ROINN

Oideachais

Department of
Education

MANNYSIRIE O
Lear

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19 July 2010

Dear Willie,

Thank you for your correspondence of 29 June 2010 attaching a copy of the Public Petition on the removal of funding for summer schemes for children with learning difficulties which was laid at the Assembly on 28 June 2010 by Tommy Gallagher MLA. I thank you also for the copy of the Official Report which records the laying of the petition.

I, too, share the concern of all those who signed the petition and I made my position very clear on the floor of the Assembly on Monday 28 June 2010 when I expressed my expectation that all Education and Library Boards (ELBs) should re-instate the special school summer school provision to the levels delivered in previous years.

The Department of Education has given a significant amount of funding to the ELBs and although there has been a small reduction in their budgets for this current financial year I have made it clear that I expect that savings should be made from their administrative budgets rather than cutting front line services.

I, therefore, welcomed the decision of the Southern and Western ELBs, on 29 June 2010, to re-instate the funding for transport for these schemes. I also met, on 1 July 2010, with representatives from the Western and Southern ELBs to discuss these summer schemes, which provide a vital service to parents and children with special needs.



Following the meeting, the decision of both these ELBs and also the decision of the South-Eastern Education and Library Board, on 2 July 2010, to fully reinstate the schemes to two weeks with transport provided is welcome. I know that parents and the children involved will also welcome this good news and look forward to enjoying the schemes.

*is nice to see
caitrona Ruane*

CAITRÍONA RUANE MLA