

Simon Thomas AM
Chair of Finance Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

3 August 2016

Dear Simon

Petition P-04-660 Additional Pressures on Funding for Education Provision Faced by Sparsely Populated Areas

The following petition, which collected 1,049 signatures, was submitted by 'Save Powys Schools' in the last Assembly.

We, the undersigned, call upon the Welsh Government to recognize the financial challenges of providing an appropriate level of educational provision in sparsely populated rural areas. Spending cuts are adversely affecting school communities to the extent that children are leaving their county of residence (and increasingly, in border counties, such as Powys, leaving Wales) in order to continue their education. Schools and sixth forms are at breaking point, exhausted by continual threat of closure. Our children are forced to travel unsustainable distances on minor roads, breaking up friendship groups and adding up to two hours to the school day. Nursery education is now also under threat, and with continuous cuts to school budgets causing round after round of redundancies, it is impossible to deliver the quality of education that teachers trained for and that our young people deserve. We urge the Welsh Government to immediately investigate the additional challenges to education in sparsely populated rural areas, and to increase the funding to areas such as Powys accordingly. The loss of our schools heralds the death of our communities and our local economies. If a devolved Wales is to thrive, we need our Government to lead the funding discussions in Westminster. We need you on our side!.

The Petitions Committee considered the petition at our meeting on 12 July when we agreed to close the petition. However, in doing so, the Committee agreed that I should write to you as Chair of the Finance Committee so that the issues raised



by the petition could be taken into account in your consideration of the next budget round.

I am writing in broadly similar terms to the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams AM, and to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government, Mark Drakeford AM.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike', is written over a diagonal line that extends from the bottom left towards the top right.

Mike Hedges AC/AM
Cadeirydd/ Chair