

## Integrated Curriculum Financial Planning



It is not unusual for formal budgeting/costing not to form part of the curriculum planning process. It is rather more usual for the finance department to be presented with a staff structure and then asked to find efficiency savings to support the cost of the planned curriculum. The CFO in most schools often then spends time trying to make savings on contracts, admin staff etc., so that other costs are kept to a minimum to support the cost of the curriculum but as you are aware you are left looking at a small proportion of the budget to try and make significant savings at a time when funding is stretched.

Integrated curriculum financial planning (ICFP) is a strategic curriculum led financial planning model that seeks to ensure your planned curriculum is affordable. ICFP should start with a thorough understanding of the cost of financing the curriculum.

Accordingly the process must begin with the identification of a curriculum that delivers:

- depth, breadth and balance.
- meets the needs of all students
- prepares all students for secondary transfer / adult life
- ensures access for vulnerable/ SEN children
- prepares those students who to enter employment, training, apprenticeships (secondary)
- prepares those students who want to go to university (secondary)
- achieves all accountability measures i.e. Ofsted expectations, SATs, GCSEs, progress 8

Once you have established what this curriculum looks like you need to understand if it is affordable and ultimately sustainable:

To assess this you should calculate a number of Key Performance Indicators across the schools in the MAT (by school and in total):

- **Cost of one lesson** calculate this as follows – all teaching staff salaries (including on costs) / number of teaching periods.

The cost per lesson should be around £2,000?

- **Contact ratio** Calculate this by dividing the total number of teaching periods in a week per the timetable by the number of periods in your week multiplied by the number of teaching staff. (Includes head leadership team etc.).

To allow for planning, preparation and assessment time the optimum ratio is considered to be 0.79.

- **Curriculum headroom/bonus** Calculate this by dividing taught periods plus 10% of available periods by available periods.

The curriculum headroom/bonus is a theoretical measure of the amount of curriculum time allocated to a class in excess of a notional basic provision. It is the number of periods above those where staff are teaching/having the required PPA.

Curriculum bonus should be less than 8%?

The additional 8% of periods should be available to support a curriculum that can then be used to focus in on need areas. Difficulties with this can arise where teachers are given additional non-contact times when they are given extra TLRs and this is an area that needs to be looked at closely to ensure you are not building in additional periods where teachers are not teaching thus increasing your curriculum bonus unnecessarily.

Who should be involved in the curriculum setting process?

- Person/s responsible for curriculum planning
- Person/s responsible for timetabling
- Director of Finance and Resources

You should also benchmark the schools against similar schools using the ESFA financial benchmarking tool. You should pay particular attention to:

- Staff pay as a percentage of total expenditure
- Average teacher cost
- Pupil to teacher ratio
- Pupil to staff ratio
- Class sizes
- Proportion of budget spent on the leadership team
- Spend per pupil for non-pay expenditure lines

The ESFA website includes a YouTube video presented by those responsible for finance at an academy called Outwood Grange (Considered by the ESFA to be a good example of financial control) who have implemented this type of financial planning and it is they that have calculated the optimum contact ratio of 0.79, and the cost per lesson of around £2,000.

Their staff structure is broadly as detailed below:

25 period week

Staff structure out of 25

Deputies teach 9 periods per week out of 25

Assistant heads teach 17 periods per week out of 25

Department heads teach 18-21 periods per week out of 25 (depends on department size)

Normal classroom teachers teach 22 periods per week out of 25

Class sizes in year 7 and 8 are 31.

---