

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE BY
DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 22nd JUNE 2010**

Question

“Can the Minister confirm that under the savings proposal ESC-4 ‘re-defining core business for schools’ he plans to axe the employment of Modern Language assistants in secondary schools, and state how many posts this will involve and what other measures are included under this ‘re-definition’?”

Will he also state what proportion of the £298,000 saving this measure accounts for?

Will he assure the Assembly that such a cut will not reduce the standards achieved in foreign language examination grades achieved by our students especially in spoken French which is a proud and unique part of our Jersey heritage?

Can he state what impact this will have on the much-heralded initiative at Hautlieu School to introduce the International Baccalaureate (IB) which requires high standards in a second language study beyond the age of 16?

Will the Minister also state whether the posts have been advertised, but that shortlisting and the interview process has been suspended? When were appointments made in previous years in order to allow appointees to take up their places for the start of the new academic year in September?

Has any decision of the States on this matter in September been pre-empted by his department’s actions?”

Answer

Yes, I can confirm that the savings proposal ESC-4 will result in the cessation in the employment of the eight temporary Modern Language Assistants. The permanent posts will be unaffected by this change.

This saving accounts for £76,495, or approximately 25% of the total saving of £298,000 identified under the proposal ESC0-4 ‘re-defining core business for schools’. The other measures relate to the stopping of initiatives now embedded in the school system, without impacting on front line services. These include the Solution Oriented Schools programme, and the training of school governors.

I am confident that schools will be able to organise their provision to ensure that standards can be maintained through this change period. It should be remembered that all pupils are taught by highly qualified and experienced modern language teachers within well resourced departments. Other academic departments achieve the appropriate results without any additional support. I should add that technology has vastly improved since the original provision of language assistants, and a great deal of support is now available to all pupils through the advancement in hardware and software packages.

It is expected there will be no impact on I.B. Modern Languages at Hautlieu School, as alternative provision will be made using new technologies and existing staff within the Modern Languages Department.

I can confirm that the temporary posts were advertised through the Alliance Française website, but the process was suspended shortly after advertising but prior to shortlisting. As in previous years, these posts were advertised in March/April for an October start, as the contracts run for an eight-month period from October to May. In the event that the States should decide in September 2010 not to accept the proposed spending reduction, the Department would investigate alternative arrangements for the academic year 2010/2011, possibly involving additional support from the Alliance Française.

In the longer term, we are discussing with interested parties ways in which we can provide further support for Modern Languages.

