

Agenda Item	7
Report No	G/16/21

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Gaelic Committee

Date: 16 September

Report Title: Gaelic and Gàidhlig Medium Education Update

Report By: Executive Chief Officer, Performance and Governance

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide elected Members with an update on Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) course attainment within Gàidhlig and Gaelic in secondary schools in The Highland Council.
- 1.2 This report also updates Members on current developments in the key areas of current and future development which will support the growth of Gaelic Education in Highland Council encompassing the key priorities of GLP3 and outcomes of the Gaelic Specific Grant.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - i. note the contents of the paper and recognise the significant improvement trends in attainment and presentation numbers for Gàidhlig and Gaelic in S4, S5 and S6;
 - ii. congratulate the young people, their families and the school staff for such significant improvement in Gàidhlig SQA attainment in the Highlands in August 2021; and
 - iii. agree that a report will be brought back to the Gaelic Committee highlighting best practice in strategies being deployed to further improve work in our secondary schools.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource - The resource implications are within the current main budget stream which include Gaelic Specific Grant, COVID support fund, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, and Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund (Bòrd na Gàidhlig).
- 3.2 Legal - The Highland Council has a requirement to implement its Gaelic Language Plan under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act of 2005.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island) - The Report complies with The Highland Council policies on Equality.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever - The Gaelic Team currently attend all meetings online and virtually, thus reducing the requirement for business travel.
- 3.5 Risk - The Risk is minimal and adheres to the current National and Highland Council guidance in relation to COVID-19.
- 3.6 Gaelic - The report enhances Gaelic Development within The Highland Council area and supports the implementation of the Gaelic Language Plan.

4. Overview – Scottish Qualifications Authority

- 4.1 In February 2021, a revised model for delivering National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher results in 2021 was shared by the National Qualifications Group for session 2020-21.
- 4.2 The Scottish education system took action to ensure a process of demonstrated learner evidence to support the verification took place during a period of significant disruption to learning. The verification process ensured that evidence requirements aimed to preserve validity and public confidence in qualifications, content, and their contexts. In order to support learning and teaching, assessment components were changed or minimised accordingly by SQA.
- 4.3 On Wednesday 18 August 2021 the SQA announced that this session's examinations will take place from 26 April to 1 June 2022 with results day on 9 August 2022. The SQA has shared that planning for delivering exams is now underway with cognisance of plans for any further disruption that may happen due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 4.4 Should there be further significant disruption to learning and teaching this session, beyond that experienced in 2020-21, the SQA has also shared that appropriate additional support measures for learners will be put in place to ensure that exams can still go ahead.

5. Achievement Data – Level 4-6 Gaelic Learners and Gàidhlig

- 5.1 An overview of achievement in A-C passes in both Gaelic and Gàidhlig is as follows;
 - 22 young people in S4 achieved passes at SCQF Level 4 in Gaelic (Learners), compared to 12 in 2020 and 9 in 2019.

- 50 young people in S4 achieved A-C passes at SCQF Level 5 in Gaelic (Learners) compared to 48 in 2020 and 34 in 2019.
- 53 young people in S4 achieved A-C passes in SCQF Level 5 Gaidhlig, compared to 47 in 2020 and 43 in 2019.
- In S5, 16 young people achieved A-C passes at SCQF Level 6 in Gaelic (Learners), compared to 13 in 2020 and 16 in 2019.
- 29 young people in S5 achieved A-C passes in SCQF Level 6 Gaidhlig, compared to 27 in 2020 and 24 in 2019.

At all levels and all ages, a total of 211 passes in Gaelic (Learners) and Gaidhlig were achieved in 2021, compared to 194 in 2020 and 156 in 2019.

- 5.2 An infograph comparing 2019 and 2021 data is available in Appendix 1. This depicts the growth in the number of pupils the number of pupils attaining success in both Gaelic and Gàidhlig Scottish Qualifications.
- 5.3 There is recognition, both locally and nationally, that there is a growing need to build a curriculum for Gàidhlig Medium subject choices in both the BGE phase and Senior Phase of secondary schools. Education Scotland, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Highland Council are engaging in discussions on the support required to develop this area. This is part of a wider national picture requiring a strategic support structure with a view to strengthening the range of subjects that can be taught in GME for both a broad general education and in the senior phase of secondary school.

6. National benchmarking data (other Local Authorities)

- 6.1 The Scottish Government's online benchmarking tool Insight has not yet gone live and therefore comparisons between Highland SQA attainment data and that of other authorities and certain national measures is not yet possible.
- 6.2 It is proposed that further information for the Gaelic Committee be presented when this is possible, when Insight is updated to give full information about all school leavers.

7. Key Elements of Education Development in GLP3 and Gaelic Specific Grant Projects

- 7.1 A pilot is underway with the Highland Virtual Academy to support Gaelic in BGE. Gaelic is now delivered online teaching to 2 x S1 classes and 2 x S2 classes in Kinlochleven High School for Gaelic learners. This development contributes directly to GLP 3 commitment to 'a systematic and sustainable approach to increase the percentage of Gaelic Learners in establishments'.
- 7.2 1+2 probationer training will also be provided to those teaching within Gaelic L2 and L3 schools. This will be an online morning session and a follow-up after school sessions to provide continued support and momentum. Schools delivering Gaelic as an L2 and L3 will continue to be supported with training courses highlighted and the signposting of online self-study courses for teachers looking to improve their own Gaelic language skills.

7.3 Gaelic Specific Grant *Project 3 – Gaelic in Early Learning and Childcare, Primary and Secondary Education Description*: Plan and implement with stakeholders and partners, opportunities for continued professional development, working with our school communities and GME provision senior managers within schools to ensure we are responsive to their needs, working in partnership with other authorities when required.

Examples of current development work in these areas are as follows:

- Digital networking events will be co-ordinated by the Gaelic Team for GME Primary, Secondary and Probationer teachers across Highland re-connect with colleagues. This is particularly important for teachers new to Highland or working in rural schools.
- Sharing good practice with GME colleagues across Highland.
- Opportunities to discuss and encourage the creation of online resources, contribute to audit questions on policy implementation and resources, as detailed in GLP3.
- Community Learning Partnerships are being mapped in a pilot program between targeted schools and Community Learning and Development officers, detailing projects supported in schools by the Gaelic team as well as other partners to record, plan and evidence all collaboration. This will contribute to refreshed approach to Gaelic reporting within Highland School's Improvement Planning processes.
- Officers and Highland Council teachers lead workshops at national events including Eòlas (Professional Development Event lead by Initial Teacher Education Group) and CLAS, Comann Luchd Teagaisg Àrd-Sgoiltean and continue their remits as authority representatives on national steering groups.
- The Education and Learning Leadership and Empowerment Team also hosted a leadership workshop on ***Supporting Gaelic Medium Education, Language in your school***, open to all school leadership teams.
- The Early Years Officers have included Gaelic Medium Teacher representation on their Play Pedagogy group and will run events across the upcoming session.

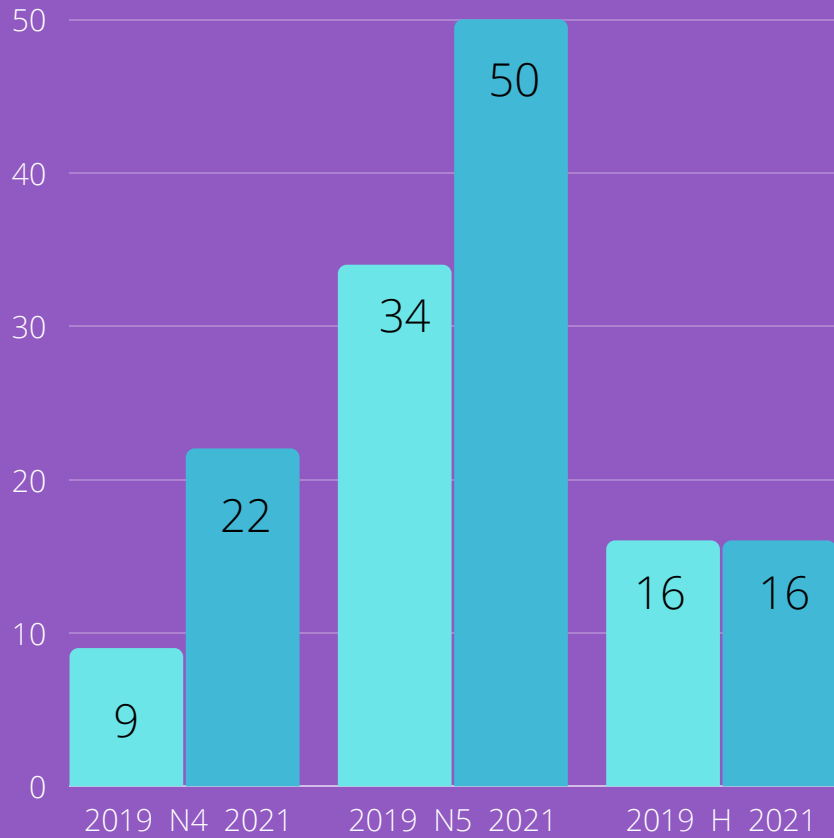
Designation: **Executive Chief Officer, Performance and Governance**

Date: 6 September 2021

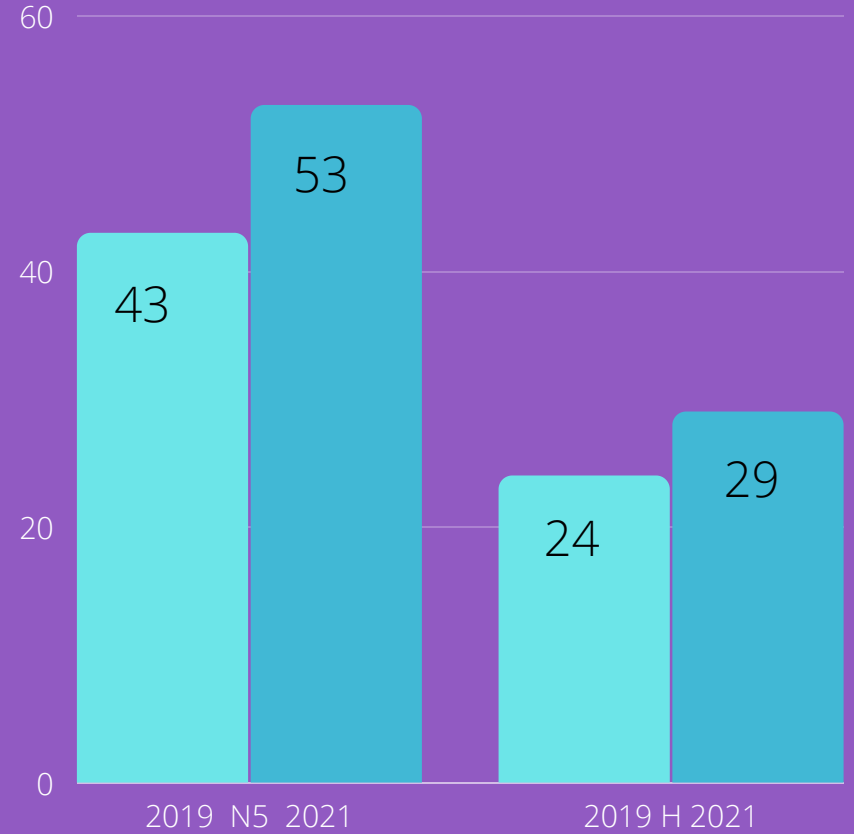
Author: Lena Walker, Gaelic Development Manager

Background Papers:

LUCHD-IONNSACHAIDH — **GAEELIC LEARNERS**



TORAIIDHEAN DEUCHAINNEAN SQA



SQA ATTAINMENT RESULTS

GÀIDHLIG — **GAEELIC FLUENT**

