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STOP HIGHLAND SCHOOL CUTS – online petition launched to oppose budget cuts in education

Peter Peacock, Rhoda Grant and David Stewart, Highlands and Islands Labour MSPs, are calling for parents and grandparents to sign an online petition to protest cuts to the education budget proposed by Highland Council.

Budget figures reveal an estimated cut of 50 teachers and 50 more support staff across the Highlands and Islands area.

"It is vital that we oppose these Highland Council school cuts. Our analysis has revealed the Council is making proposed 'savings' of £5.123m from the Education, Culture and Sport budget alone – this seems difficult to justify," said Mrs Grant.

A change in formula for teachers in schools means that 45 per cent of rural primary schools across the area are placed in the danger zone when calculating how many teachers they are entitled to. In addition secondary schools face a 3 percent adjustment to their formulas.

"Adjusting these figures means schools need more children on the roll to secure teaching staff. This is in direct opposition to SNP Government claims that there should be year on year moves to reduce class sizes. The Labour members in the Highlands will be meeting with teaching unions as soon as possible to address this issue and the others which will bring about such disastrous cuts," said Mrs Grant.

"The release of these figures on Friday has meant local councillors have had little time to consult and local people no opportunity to object. I would urge anyone concerned to sign the online petition and print it off to take to the school gates. The petition can be found on www.davidstewart.org.uk, www.peterpeacock.org.uk and www.rhodagrants.org.uk.

"We will fight these measures all the way and will be writing to head teachers and school councils to offer support. We must try to stop Highland Council from cutting our school budgets," she said.

The petition can be signed at : <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/stophighlandschoolcuts>

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