

To whom it may concern,

Thank you for sharing the document regarding the strukturresurser. We very much appreciate that you ask for our view on the proposed changes. Although not a lot of time was given to shape our thoughts, we still would like to provide a somewhat elaborate response, not only to the suggested cut in strukturresurser for the preschool, but also more generally to the developments regarding friskolor and bidrag.

STRUKTURRESURSER

For what we understand the preschool's strukturresurser will be reduced by over 8000 SEK (from 10770 sek to 2358 sek) per child/ year. The argument is that socioekonomiska bakgrundsvariablerna determine the strukturresurser, and that since children at international schools come from families whose parents may have an above average level of education, strukturresurser should be cut. However, this reasoning is based on a misunderstanding of the heavy responsibilities that lay on international schools exactly because of the population they cater for. Many students come straight from abroad, are new in Sweden, speak different languages at home, and come from very different cultural backgrounds. It is very challenging to provide the individual support needed to help settle students in their new culture, get used to the classroom settings, and bring them to the right level.

To give an idea, on average in the preschool we have around 15 children in a group and typically have 10-11 different cultural backgrounds / nationalities. The strukturresurser give us just that extra to make it possible to put extra resources in place for the more individual approach and to ease in children into Sweden and schooling. The new proposition will lead to a cut of 480 000 sek per year in the preschool. In a class of 15 students in the preschool, we have 2 staff members. Whereas the flexibility of having more staff is very beneficial and needed, the budget would not allow that.

THE BROADER ISSUE: FRISKOLOR AND SUPPORT

We are hopeful that the above will help you reconsider the suggested cut. It is getting increasingly tight for most friskolor and we are frustrated by negativity we as friskola have experienced in the last few years (it must be mentioned that within Lunds Kommun we have had some very positive experiences/collaboration throughout the years as well). Perhaps not directly related to struktur resurser, but still relevant are other issues around support. A few examples to illustrate this :

1. In the past years, months and weeks friskolor in general have been under attack. The government is preparing a proposition to cut the support for friskolor with 8-10% under the pretext that 1) kommunala skolor have more responsibilities, and 2) that friskolor are using profits to line the pockets of owners. Both are blatant misrepresentations of friskolor. Rather than handling the issues associated with a few of them (e.g. deal with utdelning in schools organised as AB's), these two arguments appear to be attempts to legitimise financial cuts in order to dramatically reduce the number of friskolor across Sweden. Indeed, the large majority of friskolor will not be able to survive cuts. The few that somehow may be able to survive would have to severely compromise quality (much too large classes for instance).
2. Lund's recent cut in lokalbidrag. This is another big blow for our school (and maybe many friskolor) over kommunal schools, as kommunal schools rent at lower rates than market level. With the lowered lokalbidrag (close to 800 000 SEK per year), we have to dig even more into other budgets to cover the costs.
3. There is a rather negative atmosphere around friskolor in Sweden. Whereas I can't judge for other international schools, we at LIS always have to work very hard to achieve what is needed, without any privileges. It may be interesting to know that as a friskola, we have always managed our budgets with a lot of creativity. For instance, LIS has for a large part relied on second hand and free furniture. This contrasts with other schools where furniture is regularly replaced with new. Whereas LIS takes pride

in giving used furniture a second life, the school also considers this a good way to save money. We always aim to creatively manage the budgets, but friskolor are generally depicted as for profit, and charlatan businesses. This is very unfortunate as for our school, and probably many other friskolor the opposite is true.

Lund International School has served Lunds kommun for over 15 years with internationally compatible education and has a highly dedicated staff committed to make a positive impact to the lives and education of international families that have been recruited to Sweden. The international community in Lunds Kommun is growing, and the demand for the international baccalaureate programmes is increasing. We want to continue to work with Lund to ensure a continuation of high quality international education, and therefore ask you not to cut our budget further.

We are looking forward to your response.

Kind regards,

On behalf of the LIS board,
Melani Moniharapon, Rektor

Lund International School