

Dear Peter Heaton-Jones MP

I am contacting you again with regard to the mounting fears that Head Teachers and Principals have in relation to school funding.

Recently, school leaders from four counties expressed significant concern at the bleak situation that their schools, and the vast majority of others, are facing. Now, school leaders in North Devon have joined with 13 other counties as we continue to speak with 'one voice'.

In spite of the increasingly damaging financial situation, no adequate response has been provided in terms of our concerns about current and future spending proposals made by the Department for Education.

There is no question that a new National Funding Formula is urgently required but it must be credible and reverse the unsustainable and deeply unsatisfactory methodology that is currently used to allocate school funds.

Rather than making matters better, the new National Funding Formula proposals do not offer meaningful solutions to our current and future school finances. Amongst many issues, key points that remain include:

- The new National Funding Formula is not new. It is based on a flawed and outdated model.
- As a consequence, considerable and completely unacceptable inequalities will persist in our school funding arrangements.
- The new National Funding Formula attempts to ignore inflationary cost pressures that all schools are enduring.
- The Department for Education does not know what the minimum funding required for an individual pupil is and how this relates to minimum school funding for a school to adequately resource staffing and equipment.
- The assumption that schools all have 'further efficiencies' to make is fundamentally flawed, especially for those schools that have been severely low funded for an extended period of time.

To make matters worse - far worse - the Department for Education continues to divert significant monies to capital and revenue funding such as Free School provision and Grammar School expansion and this does not always guarantee value for money. At the same time, our schools simply do not have adequate funds to provide the education that every child in our care needs and deserves.

To see such ill-judged spending being prioritised in a time of austerity is unacceptable. The disconnect between a Department making decisions that seem to entirely ignore the wishes and needs of dedicated and committed school leaders provides significant and tangible cause for concern.

School leaders simply want a reasonable settlement that sees every child in every school adequately funded. There is no question that schools with differing contextual challenges should be funded differently but this should not come at the expense of allowing every school to operate effectively on behalf of the pupils' families and communities that we serve.

As a collective group representing over 3500 schools and 1.5million pupils we do not wish to be ignored any longer. We need, therefore, for our local political representatives to stand up for every school in their constituency and make clear that considerable changes to funding arrangements/proposals must be put in place.

Any permanent new funding formula will require parliamentary approval and this makes your role even more crucial.

The Department for Education has had two years (and huge resources) to produce a sustainable new formula – now is the time for implementing a formula that improves schools budgets for the vast majority rather than the few.

We would be grateful, therefore, for you to join us and sign up to the attached statement which we believe to be transparent, fair and reasonable. Schools and their communities will then be able to present a united front to the Department for Education to ensure that the children in our schools receive the educational opportunities that they deserve.

In turn, parents and carers will be able to see, without equivocation, that their child's education is being put first by local school and political leaders and that meaningful changes to an urgently required new National Funding Formula will be put in place.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Pearce

For and on behalf of

Orchard Vale Community School

Brighton (secondary) | Cambridgeshire | Cornwall | Devon | East Sussex | Essex |
Hertfordshire | Norfolk | Peterborough | Suffolk | Surrey | Thurrock | West Sussex |
Wokingham

