

Schools' Members

**Terl Bryant (Governor, Stamford Queen Eleanor) (Chairman)**

Bill Bush (Headteacher, The Phoenix, Grantham), Michael Follows MBE (Governor, Boston John Fielding Community Special), Tony Gaskell (Governor, Lincoln Manor Leas Infant), Anne Grief (Headteacher, Long Sutton Primary), Roger Hale (Headteacher, Caistor Grammar), Richard Hardesty (Governor, North Cockerington CofE Primary), Simon Hardy (Faith Groups), Dominic Loyd (Headteacher, Boston Tower Road Primary), Jeremy Newnham (Headteacher, Caistor Yarborough), Heather Steed (Headteacher, Boston Nursery School), Jennifer Wheeldon (Headteacher, Scothern, Ellison Boulters Primary) and Ian Wilkinson (Headteacher, Deeping St James's Primary)

Officials

Children's Directorate – Debbie Barnes (Assistant Director) and Tony Warnock (Head of Finance), Performance and Governance Directorate – Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer);

Apologies for absence:- John Beswick (Governor, Louth Cordeaux), Sharron Close (Headteacher, Gainsborough White's Wood Lane Junior), Professor Ken Durrands CBE (Governor, Grantham, The Kings) and Julie Marshall (representative of Private, Voluntary and Independent Early Year's Providers of the free entitlement to early years education)

10. GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON SCHOOL FUNDING (minute 7, Schools' Forum, 29 June 2011)

Tony Warnock presented a report on the need to respond to "A Consultation on School Funding Reform: Proposals for a Fairer System".

Following advice from Tony Warnock on the importance of the questions, the Forum responded as follows:-

1. Question 1 (Would you prefer the formula to be based on a) a notional budget for every school; or b) the pupils in each local authority area?)

Forum response – Support between options (a) and (b) split between primary and secondary and therefore this should be reflected in the response.

(Comments by the Forum included:-

1. History of under funding of education in Lincolnshire.
2. More transparency required on funding especially between what Lincolnshire received compared to the rest of the country.

3. Time constraints imposed on small schools meant they had difficulty understanding the system of funding).
2. Question 4 (Do you think that setting a range of allowable primary / secondary ratios around the national average is the right approach to ensure that there is consistency across the country?)

Forum Response – Support response detailed in the report. However, include reference in the covering letter about the need for more information to make a proper decision.

(Comments by the Forum included:-

1. By following the parameters set nationally this would allow protection for all.
  2. The need for safeguards to be built in and if there were differences then it was important to know the reasons rather than rely upon what had happened in the past.
  3. Education reasons to be explained if there was a difference.
  4. If the ratios were wide enough this would allow flexibility.
  5. Prescriptive ratios were not required. Maximum flexibility was required.
4. Question 5 (Do you think we should implement option (i) or (ii) when calculating budgets for Academies?)

Forum response – support response in the report subject to a footnote being added that an Academy representative on the Forum would like to see national funding.

(A comment by the Forum included an Academy preference for national funding).

5. Question 6 (Do you think these options would help to achieve greater representation and stronger accountability at a local level?)

Forum response – support response in the report.

(Comments by the Forum included:-

1. The Forum's initiative in instigating the revised arrangements for Special Education Needs.
  2. Headteachers' meetings considered items raised at the Forum.
  3. The Forum comprised representation from all school sectors including Academies.
  4. Should all schools in Lincolnshire become Academies would the Forum still have a role?)
6. Question 10 (Do you agree that we should use Ever FSM to allocate deprivation funding in the national formula? Should this be Ever 3 or Ever 6?)

Forum response – support response detailed in the report.

(Comments by the Forum included:-

1. Possible effects on free school meal provision because of government changes to the benefit system.
  2. Some secondary schools were issuing plastic credit cards for free school meals to avoid any embarrassment caused by disclosure.
  3. Use of Ever 6 was more acceptable as it made budgeting more predictable.
7. Question 11 (If we have a school-level formula, do you agree that £95,000 is an appropriate amount for a primary school lump sum?)

Forum response – the Forum while supporting the response in the report considered that they needed more information to give a proper response.

(Comments by the Forum included:-

1. Small schools struggled and were expensive to run.
  2. Small schools needed to be good enough to serve the community.
  3. The effect of falling rolls was aggravating the situation).
8. Question 18 (Do you think we should: (a) Continue with a maximum decrease of -1.5% per pupil each year and accept that this will mean very slow progress towards full system reform; or (b) Continue with a -1.5% per pupil floor in 2013-14 but lower it thereafter so that we can make faster progress?)

Forum response – support response detailed in the report.

9. Question 23: (Is this the right set of principles for funding children and young people with high needs?)

Question 24: (Would it be appropriate to provide a base level of funding per pupil or place to all specialist SEN and LD/D settings, with individualised top up above that?)

Question 25: (Is £10,000 an appropriate level for this funding?)

(NOTE:- The Chairman declared a personal interest and did not vote on this item as a Councillor and Commissioner for Supporting People at South Kesteven District Council)

Forum response - Support responses detailed in the report subject to inclusion of comments about the shortage of information to enable a full response to be given.

(Comments made by the Forum included –

1. All Academies should be free to set their own admissions and budgets.
2. In the future there should be commissioning funding, statements would cease to be produced, that regional bodies would be established to provide special education and that all special schools would be managed centrally.

3. Concern was also raised about the distance some children with special needs had to be transported and it was recognised that while transport was outside the terms of reference it was an issue in Lincolnshire).

11. Question 21 (Do you think the funding for bcal authority LACSEG should be moved to a national formula basis rather than using individual LA section 251 returns?)

Forum response - Support the response detailed in the report but more transparency required.

(Comments by the Forum included the need for more transparency in s251 statistics; the need for clarity in Academies' funding; the completion of s251 varied amongst local authorities)

12. Question 47 (Do you think we should implement the proposed reforms in 2013-14 or during the next spending period?)

Response - support response as detailed in the report.

(A comment by the Forum included the need for more transparency).

RESOLVED

(1) That, subject to the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen amending any response of the Forum to coincide with the response made by the Council's Executive's response, the comments be sent to the DfE.

(2) That Tony Warnock be thanked for his work in producing the initial responses.

The meeting closed at 3.50pm