

Formula Funding Review – Outcome of Schools Consultation

1. Introduction

This paper provides a summary of the feedback received from schools relating to a recent consultation that was carried out seeking views from schools on the impact of the Schools Funding Reform Arrangements for 2013/14.

2. Recommendations

Schools Forum are recommended to take the following action:

- a) Note the comments raised by schools
- b) Decide which actions to take in response to concerns and issues that schools have raised

3. Consultation Feedback

In total, 22 responses were received (1 Nursery School, 17 Maintained Primary, 1 Maintained Secondary, 2 Academy Secondary and the Primary Forum). The response from the Primary Forum has been counted as one response although in reality this body represents all primary schools.

Set out below is a summary of the outcome of the recent consultation that was carried out with schools on the impact of the Schools Funding Reform Arrangements for 2013/14, where schools were asked two questions. Included with this report is a spreadsheet that provides a complete analysis of the responses received from schools.

Question 1. Are the Principles and Objectives that Schools Forum were working with still valid, or would you set a different set of parameters?

The following table summarises the responses received from schools:

Response	Numbers	%
Yes	3	13.6%
No	13	59.1%
Don't Know	2	9.1%
No Response	4	18.2%
Totals	22	100.0%

It is clear from the responses received that there is a clear message that schools (primary in particular) have a number of concerns about the principles set. The most notable are set out below:

- i) The protection of the ratio of funding between primary and secondary schools was raised as a concern. Primary schools have a view that if more funds are targeted at the primary sector the pupils will be better educated when transferring to secondary and thus reduce the need for high levels of support in the secondary sector.
- ii) The AWPU for each stage should reflect the minimum needs of all pupils
- iii) Rather than moving towards the national average, the Schools Forum should consider moving towards the statistical neighbours average, which will take into account local circumstances

Question 2. Are there any particular factors, or part of the “best fit” package, you would like Schools Forum to review?

The following table summarises the responses received from schools:

Response	Numbers	%
Yes	14	63.6%
No	2	9.1%
Don't Know	2	9.1%
No Response	4	18.2%
Totals	22	100.0%

It is clear from the responses received that there is a clear message that schools (primary in particular) would like Schools Forum to undertake a further review of the funding formula. The suggested factors to be reviewed are set out below:

- i) High Needs Funding – schools are concerned that they are not receiving the £6,000; there is a need to review the 2% cluster school SEN funding level with an aim of reducing the percentage trigger
- ii) AWPU Levels
- iii) Lump Sum – differentiate between primary and secondary; reduce the level of the lump sum
- iv) Mobility – move funding into Deprivation
- v) Deprivation Funding – The level of deprivation funding should be reviewed (reduced?) as schools also receive Pupil Premium funding; consider using IDACI; increase the deprivation funding to the 2012/13 level
- vi) EAL Funding – Aim to reduce this factor, using this factor as a mathematical exercise rather than through need is questionable as EAL children generally achieve good level of attainment

Other Comments

A number of other comments were received that raised concerns on the datasets used, however, these are set by the DfE and cannot be changed, but they are noted below for completeness:

- i) Primary schools would like to have a separate AWPU for reception classes
- ii) Primary schools are concerned at the use of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile
- iii) The DfE should be lobbied to include a Cost of Free School Meals Factor into the funding formula
- iv) Schools should be rewarded and funded for improved achievement
- v) The data used should not be based on historical information
- vi) Expanding schools are not being fully funded by the Local Authority

Suggested Remodelling

Based on the information received through this consultation and the requirements as set out in the DfE's paper for 2014/15, officers of the local authority are suggesting that the following funding models are produced to provide a steer for Schools Forum on the most appropriate funding formula for 2014/15:

1. Use the national average funding rates
2. Use the statistical neighbours average funding rates
3. Introduce differential lump sums
4. Increase deprivation funding to 2012/13 levels including cost of free school meals
5. Reduce the level of EAL funding
6. Consider removing the EAL funding in its entirety
7. Introduce IDACI as a factor for distributing Deprivation funding based on the statistical neighbours approach
8. Increase attainment funding to ensure that every eligible statemented SEN child receives at least £6,000, whilst maintaining the level of funding received in 2012/13.