

TITLE OF REPORT: Mainstream School Funding Consultation Results

Purpose of the Report

1. To bring to Schools Forum the outcome of the Mainstream School Funding consultation on the mainstream school funding factors and funding options.

Mainstream School Funding Consultation

2. Schools Forum and all schools must be consulted on any changes to schools funding. The consultation period ran from 16 to 26 November 2021 and 20 consultation responses were received. A summary of the responses and comments are in appendices 1 and 2 respectively.
3. The vast majority of the questions received a positive response with over 90% of responses being “yes”, 5% of responses were “don’t know” and 4% of responses were “no”.

Proposal

4. It is proposed that the recommendations set out in the mainstream school funding formula consultation are implemented as far as possible when the updated APT and the December DSG Settlement are received.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that Schools Forum notes the consultation responses and comments.

For the following reasons: -

- To enable mainstream school funding allocations to be calculated within DfE timescales.
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CONTACT: Carole Smith ext. 2747

Appendix 1 Consultation Results

Questions	Summary of Responses		
	Yes	Don't Know	No
Q1 Do you accept the proposal to use the NFF factor values as set out in appendix 1 of the consultation document?	19	0	1
Q2 Do you accept the proposal to try and have the highest MFG possible whilst maintaining an affordable formula and minimising capping?	18	0	2
Q3 Do you accept the scaling factor of 100%?	18	2	0
Q4 Do you accept the capping of gains at the highest percentage to enable the formula to be affordable?	17	1	1
Q5 Do you accept that any DfE allocated growth funding should be held centrally in the Growth Fund for distribution to qualifying schools?	18	2	0

Appendix 2 Comments

Comments

Q1

If I have understood this correctly, the NFF would offer schools less than is currently built in should they have higher proportions of pupil mobility. If this is the case I disagree as higher than average pupil mobility can have bring budget pressure. If this is the right place to say, I think schools taking in previously home-schooled children should be paid AWPU equivalent as they require increase support to settle and in our experience bring no funding at all as they have no previous AWPU to transfer.

Q2

Remove capping first then do the MFG, MFG is based on history.

The MFG should be as high as possible (affordable) after capping has first been minimised (or eliminated). This is because the funding formula is predominantly driven by pupil characteristics and so to cap funding to a school will starve funding for children who need it. MFG is important to schools, but it is driven by historic funding rather than the needs of current pupils.

Q3

Scaling should only be considered if there is insufficient funding to facilitate gains.

Q4

Assuming that this means that the formula is not affordable - wouldn't scaling of gains make more sense?

Gains should only be capped in the event that the formula is not affordable. Scaling should also be considered should this be the case.

Q5

If the money is not held centrally where does it go?

It is essential that the LA should have the power to allocate any growth funding according to local need. The LA knows the socio-economic needs of the locality best. Nor should growth funding only be available to schools in certain categories, e.g. academies. House-building in the local area can impose massive pressures on schools and available local funding must be made available immediately to be able to meet the needs of children who have just moved into the area.

A number of schools have grown significantly over the past few years, but have not met the thresholds for an allocation of growth funding. This growth has therefore been funded by schools themselves (even when this growth has been at the request of the LA). Consideration should be made to use the growth fund for schools who have been in this position.

Other Comments

It won't be a surprise to see me take this opportunity to raise SEND funding. I think one of the IDACI measure relates to SEND/Notional SEND funding.

I think there should be a far greater link between current number of children in school with EHCPs and the level of Notional SEND funding.

Despite being a HT for a while I still don't fully understand the questions, terminology etc.

A talking heads meeting to briefly explain would be beneficial or a simple guide.

Perhaps if heads don't understand they won't respond.

Thank you

Thank you for all you do for us Carol. I don't understand very much of it (!!) but I know that you are working with our best interests, and the best interests of our pupils at heart.

I realise that the funding distributed by the formula is unlikely to result in any capping, however the principles outlined above are consistent with funding to meet the needs of children.