

f40 Executive Committee Meeting

Saturday 10 May 2008

Held at Wyboston Lakes Conference Centre, Bedfordshire

Attendees

David Kidney, Chair
Doug Allan, f40 Secretariat
Ivan Ould, Leics
Tony Norton, N Lincs
Jon Pearsall, Worcs
Chris Chapman, Cheshire
Joe Jefferies, NASUWT
Gillian Hayward, Glous
Mick Brookes, NAHT

Francis Loftus, N Yorks
Kevin Green, Beds
David Smith, Wigan
Chris Levy, NAGS

Apologies

Barbara Westwood, Bury
David Rowlands, Cheshire
Helen Donovan, Worcestershire

Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2008 were approved as an accurate record of the proceedings.

Conference Outcomes

It was generally agreed that the conference had gone very well and that f40 is in a very good position to influence the way in which the DSG review proceeds. Thanks were offered to all of the speakers – particularly Dugald Sandeman – and the delegates for giving up their Saturday to continue the campaign for fairer funding.

The various presentations will be available for viewing/downloading on f40's website within a few days, alongside a report of the proceedings.

It was agreed that the f40 approach would be to:

- Argue for the best possible settlement for all
- Keep pressing to bridge the funding gap
- Ensure we argue strongly to ensure the debate about ACA goes our way
- Argue for the use of the best available statistics in relation to educational achievement (including super outputs!)
- Avoid any incentive to fund under-achievement rather than help for under-achievers
- Remind the government that authorities sometimes have little or no choice about maintaining small schools.

DSG Formula Review

The review is progressing and f40 is actively involved. Updates and all documentation is held on the Teacher Net website and appropriate reports are circulated by DA to f40 Executive Members.

DA circulated an updated schedule and project plan that the DSG Review Group is working to. The 12 May meeting has been cancelled and business moved forward to the next meeting scheduled for week beginning 9 June.

The main issue for that meeting will be Activity-Led Funding, which Lindsey Wharmby has already prepared a draft report on. It was agreed that this report should be adjusted to reflect comments received from Derbyshire CC and then despatched to the DSG Review Group as f40's formal submission.

The 9 June DSG Review Group meeting will also consider SEN costs. F40 have not gathered evidence in this respect so far. Ivan Ould of Leics agreed to undertake some initial research and provide background paper as a starter for f40 discussion. IO to supply asap to DA, who will then circulate to all Executive members for additional comments.

The Group also has LW's draft report on ACA, which is the subject of the DSG Review Group's discussion in July. There is time, therefore, for the paper to be further developed if members think that is necessary. DA to circulate to all Executive Members, Children's Directors and School Forum chairs for comments, giving three weeks for responses.

Next Steps

The Executive felt it was extremely important to alert all f40 members and representatives at other authorities which ought to be in membership of the Group, about current activities – the outcomes of the conference and DSG review. It is felt that the poorest authorities will only achieve success in changing the funding formula if we all work together.

DA to draft and design an electronic newsletter for widespread distribution to existing and potential members. To include a "best practice" note stating that Gloucestershire Schools Forum includes an f40 item on each agenda, and suggesting that other Forums might wish to take up the idea. Plus an item from Bedfordshire on the benefits the authority feels it has received from membership.

DK suggested that every poorly funded local authority should be in membership of f40 and he wondered how existing members could actively campaign to get their nearest qualifying authorities to join. Agreed that all present members should consider who they could approach to attract more member authorities. DA to include an article on membership in the proposed newsletter.

Membership and Finances

There were 25 authorities in membership in 2007-08, although DA reported that Suffolk CC had not paid their annual subscription, despite several approaches. Invoices for 2008-09 subscriptions have been issued and as of 10 May, nineteen out of 25 authorities had paid.

Next Meeting

Date in June to be agreed by DA/DK and to be held at Amerton Farm. (Note: Provisional date for meeting is Saturday 7 June at 12.30pm). To be confirmed asap.

DA informed the Executive Committee that he will be on annual leave from 20 June, returning to work on Tuesday 8 July.