



The Rt. Hon. Nicky Morgan MP
Secretary of State for Education
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London, SW1P 3BT

2 November 2015

Dear Secretary of State,

Fair funding for education

Following a recent meeting of f40's Executive Committee I agreed to write to you again on the matter of fair funding for schools.

The Committee warmly welcomed the government's announcement on the baselining of the extra £390million and it wants me to thank you for your role in getting that agreement through. It is seen as an invaluable step in the move towards a fair funding formula.

F40 would like to think it played at least a small part in achieving the extra funding and more generally in persuading the government that something more radical has to be done to change the formula used to allocate funding to our schools. Certainly we recognise that there has been a sea-change in attitude across government, with the many Members of Parliament representing poorly funded areas pushing hard for something positive to be done to put things right.

Like those Members, f40 thinks that there is a small window of opportunity for the government to take action in the early stages of this Parliament, hopefully introducing a new funding formula for 2017-18 at the latest. We recognise the considerable risk of not taking action now to ensure a satisfactory launch of a new formula in this timeframe. I am sure you are equally aware of the danger if matters are left to drift too long into the five-year administration.

As you know, in conjunction with our Vice Chair, Graham Stuart MP, we organised a letter to the Prime Minister which was signed by 111 Members from poorly funded areas. We are also involved in collecting thousands of signatures on Parliamentary Petitions which are in circulation in every f40 constituency. We are anticipating a massive response and will be organising a handover of petitions after the deadline of 13 November. These two actions clearly demonstrate the support across the country for change at an early date.

F40 has also continued to work on its own proposals for a new formula. We had a second meeting with your officials on 9 September, which went extremely well and was most constructive. We agreed to undertake further work, which is nearly complete and which will be presented to your department in early December. I personally would like to thank you for allowing an excellent working relationship to be established between f40 and your department. It has been one of the most practical and promising developments during this process.

There is a secondary issue that the Executive Committee asked me to raise. It is a significant concern that is growing about the lack of an effective joint strategy between the Department for Education and Department of Health regarding how funding operates for children's health services at a local level.

Although there is now a requirement for health and education to make joint arrangements for education, health and care provision, increasingly we are finding that the health service doesn't always contribute its fair share to the cost of services to children, or that they introduce unrealistic budgets which are quickly used up and ignore the fact that children's needs don't stop just because the budget is spent. Where this happens, schools end up taking on the responsibility of providing the health service and pick up the cost. They feel they must do this in order to ensure that the child is not further disadvantaged and can at least be given a reasonable opportunity to make progress.

The reality is that the schools are judged by Ofsted and others with the expectation that the identification of special educational needs leads to additional or different arrangements being made and a consequent improvement in progress. If health authorities don't provide support, then schools take on the responsibility in order that they aren't judged poorly on outcomes for the child. Schools argue to Ofsted that health should be paying or providing a service, but that doesn't wash with Ofsted, which simply states that if the child doesn't meet outcomes it is the schools fault and no-one else. This is very unfair and puts huge strain on school budgets.

I hope that this is something that you are prepared to look into and take action on.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ivan Ould". The signature is written in black ink on a white background. The first name "Ivan" is written in a larger, more prominent script than the surname "Ould".

Councillor Ivan Ould
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