

F40 notes of Collaboration Meeting – Monday 21 September 2018

Venue: Doubletree Hilton, London Victoria, 2 Bridge Place, Pimlico, London SW1V 1QA

(Notes taken by Doug Allan to supplement official minutes prepared by Jules White)

1. Introductions (see attendance list)

2. Memorandum of Understanding

Several delegates commented that the draft MoU was too formal and all that is required is a simple Terms of Reference indicating our willingness to work together as a collaborative group. JW to consider alternative wording and circulate for approval.

3. F40 Briefing of MPs

DA reported that he had raised the idea of a joint briefing of MPs at the last f40 Executive Meeting and members had decided that they would prefer to retain the Briefing as an f40 event. He pointed out that the goal of briefing MPs and seeking their support for further improvements to the NFF will serve everyone's interest. The proposed briefing will be held at 5pm on Monday 15 October in the Houses of Parliament.

4. F40 School Funding Briefing Paper

Since the last meeting, f40 has worked to produce a shorter and more succinct version of its briefing paper (the longer version with more detail is still available). Copies had been circulated (on a confidential basis at this point) for consideration at today's meeting and it was generally welcomed as a constructive, easy to read contribution to the debate. It was mentioned that further adjustments were intended before it is presented to MPs, particularly figures showing the shortfall in funding of the various blocks. Once released publicly, it was thought that it would be extremely useful in informing, not only MPs, but also headteachers and local authorities.

A delegate asked if redistribution was a feature of f40's activity-led formula and MJ suggested that would not be the case. F40's model is a bottom up build of school budgets to establish the cost of running a school, plus appropriate add-ons. JH suggested that an activity led formula was the best way of ensuring that schools get what they need and expressed disappointment that the government has not agreed the approach. DfE looked at a scheme many years ago but dropped the idea, presumably as they would not like to be governed by a prescribed formula.

5. NEA Schools Cuts website

We were given an update on what NEA is doing on number crunching and how they hope to update their website in the near future. Current calculations are based on forecasts of what inflation was expected to be, but soon real time figures will be used. There have been conversations with f40 and it is clear there is considerable common ground, though NEA made it clear that they couldn't support any formula re-working that resulted in losses to any schools.

Question was asked about similar research in other countries and AB suggested that work in Australia was closest, but still very different – cash attached to pupils! It is contentious and difficult – but at least there is a formula and budgets are set appropriate to formula settings.

Delegates reiterated that they are in favour of a needs-led arrangement as it would tie the government in to a formula and future budgeting to meet its requirements.

There was discussion about the date of the next budget and CSR. Obviously agreed figures showing the shortfall in budgeting and the consequences for schools needs to be presented to the Chancellor and Secretary of State as soon as possible.

6. Save Our Schools

A parent representative suggested that if a needs led model would be positive it would be supported but if it involved reduction, then perhaps not!

The SoS main activity over recent months and planned for the future is essentially about involving parents at a local level but to influence the national story. Many successful events staged. Will be supporting the Headteachers mass rally. Main event to brief London MPs planned for 10 October. Many events are social media orientated to spread the message and make politicians aware of discontent.

The agreed shortfall figures would be invaluable for forthcoming campaign activity.

7. Teachers' Pay & Retention

There was a discussion about the Teachers' pay award and the government's plans to fund it (or otherwise). NEA has held meetings with Pay Body chair and expressed concerns about, pay spine points and the way the government has activated the body's award recommendations. The government's statements are ingenuous and create ever bigger problems for schools. Caution was advised about the public message that suggested more funding is required for teachers' pay (rather than improved and properly funded education for our children!).

8. Headteachers' Mass Rally to Parliament – 28 September

JW said that the plans are coming together well and although he can't state that 1000 members that will attend, he is confident of a big turnout. He thanked all "collaborators" for their positive support in circulating information and encouraging participation. Significant media attention is anticipated, and he appealed for assistance from other headteachers to act as spokespeople on the day. Common theme is about reversing the real-time cuts and highlighting the impacts on schools. There'll be a letter to the Chancellor demanding proper funding for schools, a stop to under-funding and a demand for £400m for high needs in the next budget. (copies of the news release and letter have been circulated).

JW asked for specific messages – shortfall, number of teachers and TAs lost etc – for pointers in interviews on the rally day.

He suggested that the government is concerned about the potential media interest in school funding and has already set its own message responses to the forthcoming campaign events. He said that predictable quotes such as "there's more cash than ever before being put into education", "the UK is one of the higher spenders on education in the world" and "we have recently awarded an extra £1.3 billion for schools and £78 million for pay" are wearing a bit thin.

9. ASCL

The next stage of ASCL activity will focus on the Treasury and CSR. The next ASCL Council Session is devoted to school funding matters. Developing media strategy for next six months. Aware of many parent-led campaigns across the country.

10. NEA Datasets and Number Crunching

AB circulated two tables showing calculations of underfunding from 2015-16 to present. Total underfunding per year has been:

Schools Block	- £2.8 billion
High Needs	- £1.5 billion
Total	- £4.3 billion

It was suggested that AB may wish to see if the IFS and/or NAO would wish to test validity of figures.

The calculations will be looked at by FMRT at their meeting on Monday 24 September, alongside consideration of f40's own number crunching on updated modelling.

11. Hashtags

There was no discussion on how to communicate common language/themes and a common hashtag, though #stillnotlistening - #Saveourschools and #schoolcuts were mentioned on the agenda. F40 would not have been able to sign up to any of these.

SoS indicated that they plan to use the hashtag #parentsteachersunite

12. Next Meeting

January 2019