



Our ref: RB/jf/MP115

Date: 20 March 2017

Nick Gibb MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Leader's Office
Westfields
c/o Municipal Buildings
Earle Street
Crewe
CW1 2BJ
Tel: 01270 686011
Fax: 01270 685621

Rachel.Bailey@cheshireeast.gov.uk
www.cheshireeast.gov.uk

Dear Nick

Please find enclosed a **petition signed** by primary and secondary schools from across Cheshire East to **request that the current proposals for fairer schools funding are reconsidered.**

Also included are parent signatures from some schools and letters from pupils from three primary schools which form part of their assessed key stage 2 writing.

Clearly, all schools could have provided signatures from parents but we feel this sample along with parent marches which have taken place across Cheshire East should be sufficient for you to understand the strength of feeling in relation to the current proposals.

I am sure the pupils from our primary schools would appreciate a response to their letters.

In addition, there have been a number of demonstrations organised by parents against the reduction in funding to Cheshire East Schools, the most recent was on Saturday with about 300 people attending, this will be broadcast on the One Show this on Wednesday; in true Cheshire East style families attended with a presence from tiny babies to Great Grandmothers. The strength of local feeling about the proposed changes and unfairness is very strong in the local community **who want assurance that the basic level of funding enables their children to have the same opportunities as children from other areas.** I have invited the Head Boy from the neighbouring school to speak at the April Cabinet meeting.

Further to our meeting in January we have met with your officials and I am sure they will have relayed the key messages and information to support our arguments with you but I thought it would be helpful to summarise the key points below.

In terms of secondary schools our schools have undertaken modelling to demonstrate that the minimum amount they need to provide the basic education entitlement is £4,800, with the proportionate increase for our primary schools. Whilst further modelling would be required we feel this could be achieved by increasing the AWP/PU within the new formula to at least 78% (currently 76% with a proposed reduction in the new formula to 73%). This will still leave 22% of the budget to support those schools who have pupils who require additional pastoral and academic support and retains the principles you consulted on in stage 1.

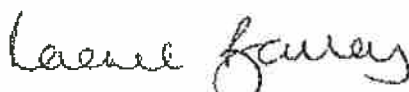
If the base funding position for school is not addressed, we believe you will see an increase of schools going into deficit budget and the Department for Education is likely to have to intervene at a greater cost. Therefore, it is surely better to address the issue now whilst there is an opportunity to do so.

I am happy for my Director of Education, Jacky Forster, to continue to work with your officials to consider modelling different scenarios. The current position being taken by the Department for Education in their response to concerns about school funding that there has been an overall increase in education funding is no doubt true, but is potentially misleading, as this additional funding is to cover the increase in pupil numbers and we have not seen an increase in the level of funding per pupil.

I would also like to take this opportunity to point out that in addition the High Needs funding proposals will result in a further £2.5Million reduction in budget. Whilst this will initially be protected we strongly believe the factors being used in this formula do not reflect the number pupils requiring additional support. The factors mirror those used in the National Funding Formula, so the same authorities will be winner and losers. I would strongly urge that this is given significant further consideration.

In summary, I must emphasise that the concern about the impact on the curriculum and the basic education entitlement is real for schools in Cheshire East and hope that a fairer funding formula does result from this consultation.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Rachel Bailey
Leader of the Council



Councillor Liz Durham
Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

Cc Edward Timpson MP
Fiona Bruce MP
David Rutley MP
Antoinette Sandbach MP
Rt Hon George Osborne CH MP