



ISLINGTON SCHOOLS FORUM

Chair: Abi Misselbrook-Lovejoy
c/o Governor Services
222 Upper Street
London N1 1XR

SCHOOLS FORUM

MEETING DATE	26 November 2020
AGENDA ITEM: 5	2021-22 Islington School Funding Consultation responses
RECOMMENDATIONS	That the Schools Forum: a) Discusses and agrees on individual recommendations made in Section 3 of the report

1 Background

- 1.1. A consultation with schools on School Funding 2020-21 has run from 5th October – 6th November.
- 1.2. There were 12 respondents to the consultation: 10 primary schools and 2 secondary schools. 11 respondents are from maintained schools and 1 from a primary academy.
- 1.3. The responses have been collated and the results are listed below. Answers can only be accepted where relevant e.g. a special school cannot respond to questions on formula factors and an academy cannot respond on de-delegation from formula funding. Comments submitted as part of a consultation response are included.
- 1.4. As in previous years, the final factor values used in the local formula will be agreed at the January Schools' Forum following the December DSG funding settlement and the release of the October 2020 census data.

2 Proposals and responses

- 2.1. We asked whether we should continue to move towards the NFF as far as is possible. 11 respondents were in favour; one was against, commenting they would prefer the LA to set budgets as it has the knowledge and experience of local area and schools.
- 2.2. All respondents were in agreement to varying the MFG level to ensure affordability of the available funding pot. Two schools commented on the fairness and equitability of this approach. One school requested more detail on the range of MFG protection allowed and point at which a cap would be applied. Local authorities have the freedom to set the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) in local formulae between +0.5% and +2% per pupil. Capping is a funds balancing mechanism that allows the MFG % to be managed within the permitted range. It will be applied if the total amount of individual budgets protection required exceeds 2%. If capping was used and total allocations still did not fit within the funding envelope, factor unit rates would need to be reduced.
- 2.3. All respondents were in agreement to questions regarding retention of funds for schools with additional/bulge classes, and for those schools with falling rolls.

One comment was made relating to growth funds:

- *Funding should only continue as class moves through school*

We confirm that growth funding for an additional class is a one-time payment as pupil numbers post opening of class are included in formula allocations. Funding for bulge classes does follow the class as it moves up the age range; it ceases when class reaches the end of its necessity.

There were several comments relating to retention of funds for falling rolls including references to amount of time allocated and rating of schools allowed access to funds. There are criteria a school must meet to be considered for falling rolls funds and these include time span and OfSTED rating; the criteria has to meet DfE requirements and be agreed locally.

Additional comments:

- *It would also be helpful to look at the correlation between numbers of vacancies as a result of falling rolls and the percentage of children on roll with significant and/or challenging needs that require a significant amount of additional support in the form of additional adults. In particular, the '£6K per pupil rule' can be extremely difficult for schools in such circumstances - especially for children in EYFS/KS1.*
- *The issue of falling rolls in schools needs to be looked at in respect of losing pupils to other boroughs and working collaboratively in particular for places that could be dual if SEN*
- *We need a strategy for the reduction in PAN across the whole of LBI longer term.*

- 2.4. In Table 2 of the consultation document, we listed the current services funded by delegation from maintained schools and asked if schools were in agreement to continue with this into 2021-22, at values to achieve current funding levels. All respondents were in favour.
- 2.5. We also asked whether schools would consider de-delegation of additional monies for 3 services not previously included: Behaviour Support, Library Service, and Insurance. Only the 11 maintained schools were eligible to respond and their answers were as follows:

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| • Behaviour Support | 6 votes in favour | 5 vote against |
| • Library Service | 5 votes in favour | 6 votes against |
| • Insurance | 6 votes in favour | 5 votes against |

- 2.6. We asked whether schools wished Schools Forum to consider all school membership, by phase, of the government Risk Protection Arrangement. The response was 7 votes in favour and 4 against.
- 2.7. When asked whether they would consider joining the government Risk Protection Arrangement on an individual school basis once current insurance contract ceased, 7 schools responded yes and four responded no.
- 2.8. Comments were invited on the central retention of services provided by the Council to schools. The majority of respondents did not comment or confirmed they wished the current provision to continue. One comment suggested SEN funding needed to be reviewed.
- 2.9. The consultation paper included proposals on strengthening SEND support. Schools were asked to indicate their preference for the grouping of schools for proposed school led SEND Support Forums. Responses were as follows:

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| • Existing associations and collaborations | 5 schools in favour |
| • Geographical areas | 2 schools in favour |
| • Needs led clusters | 5 schools in favour |

There was a comment suggesting that the use of census data alone to establish needs led clusters may require audit of EHCP applications.

After consideration of responses, a hybrid option for groupings of schools will be considered.

3. Recommendations

3.1. The following recommendations are made to Schools Forum:

- To continue to move towards the NFF as far as is possible
- Continue to retain Growth Funding
- Continue to retain Falling Rolls Funding
- To continue to retain funding for services through the Central School Services Block as previously agreed with Schools Forum; final allocations will be presented at the January 2021 Forum
- To continue de-delegated services at the current rate
- To explore the provision of the additional de-delegated services
- Request information from the Insurance and Risk Protection team to allow discussion on RPA provision

Contact

Name: Debbie Stevenson
Title: Head of Schools & Early Years Finance Services
Tel: 020 7527 5763
Email: debra.stevenson@islington.gov.uk