



30 March 2017

Dear Parents/Carers,

Education Funding Update

I am sure that you have seen the considerable coverage over the past few months about the very significant issues around education funding. You may, however, be less aware of the very real impacts of the Government's austerity measures in schools and the worrying projections for the future.

My purpose in writing to you is to keep you informed and also to provide an alternative view to that of government ministers, who continually claim that education budgets are being "protected in real terms". The reality for all schools across the country is very different and schools across London, including in Hounslow, have been dealing with diminishing budgets for a number of years.

Some of the funding issues that we have already faced include:

- the unfunded increased costs of National Insurance contributions;
- the unfunded increased costs of employer's pension contributions;
- the unfunded 1% pay increases for teaching staff;
- the cuts to Sixth Form funding by approximately 20%, down to the level of Sixth Form colleges;
- the removal of the Education Services Grant;
- the unfunded inflationary rise in running costs.

What this has already meant for schools around the country, includes:

- teaching and support staff posts being unfilled when people leave;
- voluntary and compulsory redundancies;
- class sizes increasing;
- the curriculum offer being reduced;
- less expenditure on teaching resources, including books;
- a reduction in expenditure on a number of areas in schools.

At school, we have seen class sizes increase as teaching staff retire or move for progression and promotion and a number of support staff have similarly not been replaced. To date, I have not had to revert to making staff redundant and, of course, my staff and I do all that we can to ensure that the school is run as efficiently as possible.

I am concerned for the future. There are some frightening projections around funding. Some of these may be exaggerated but when the National Audit Office predict the biggest real terms cut in education funding in a generation, then there are clearly worrying times ahead. This week, a cross-party Public Accounts committee, made up of MPs from all persuasions, criticises "delusions" in government over the budget situation.

The problems will be compounded if the proposal for "Fairer Funding" (a national funding formula) is introduced and this will lead to further significant cuts for London schools. For 2017-18, we are already losing about £130,000 as the lack of national funding for High Needs students has meant a cut in our budget of £100 per student to fund this shortfall.

The Department for Education has said "funding is at record levels". This is simply due to the rise in pupil numbers and a deliberate ploy to disguise the real cuts that have already taken place in schools and that are being planned over the next few years. The Government seems to be more interested in diverting funds to the establishment of Free Schools and Grammar Schools

rather than focusing limited resources on existing areas of strength like Hounslow's schools and schools like Isleworth & Syon.

Councillor Bruce, Hounslow's cabinet member for Education and Children's Services, has written to Hounslow Headteachers to congratulate them on excellent examination results, despite the financial pressures. He also noted that the Council recently voted unanimously in support of a motion opposing the proposals for Fairer Funding. He has also urged parents/carers to support the campaign against these cuts. One method of supporting us is by writing to your local MP. Hounslow's MPs - Ruth Cadbury and Seema Malhotra - have both been supportive over this issue to date. Please see below for their contact details. They will be happy to hear from you.

Despite diminishing resources from central government and the loss or reduction of many local services, we will work very hard at continuing to provide an excellent education for our students.

Yours faithfully,



Euan Ferguson
Headteacher

Ruth Cadbury MP

email: ruthcadburyp@parliament.uk

Seema Malhotra MP

email: seema.malhotra.mp@parliament.uk

Letters can be addressed to your MP at: House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA.

