

To: Principals and Chairpersons of the Board of
Governors of all grant-aided schools

Schools Finance Branch
Department of Education

10 October 2008

**CONSULTATION WITH SCHOOLS ON POTENTIAL CHANGES TO THE
LOCAL MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS COMMON FUNDING FORMULA**

The purpose of this letter is to seek the views of your school on possible changes to the current Local Management of Schools (LMS) Common Funding Formula.

As you will be aware, legislation governing school funding requires that all schools are consulted in advance of making any significant changes to the current formula funding arrangements. We would encourage all schools to take the opportunity to participate in this consultation exercise and to let us have their views (using the response form provided) on the proposed changes to the current LMS Common Funding Formula (CFF).

Please see the enclosed Consultation Document that outlines the proposals for factor changes which are:

- a) that there should be an increase in the primary pupil Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) weighting from 1.04 to 1.05;

- b) that a new Foundation Stage factor should be included in the Common Funding Formula to distribute resources to support primary schools in the delivery of the Foundation Stage of the primary curriculum; and
- c) that a new *Primary Principals' Release Time factor should be included in the Common Funding Formula to distribute resources to smaller primary schools to help ensure that at least two days per week release from teaching duties is available for the Principals of these schools.

NB ** If it is determined that this funding factor is to be introduced, an adjustment will be required to the current operation of the Small Schools' Support factor for primary schools as set out at Paragraphs 3.7 and 3.10 to 3.12 in the enclosed Consultation Document.*

No change is being proposed to the current formula funding arrangements in relation to the Small Schools' Support factor for post-primary schools.

The Consultation Document includes an outline of current funding arrangements, the aims of the proposed changes, illustrations of potential funding impacts arising from the proposed changes, and a Response Form for all schools to submit their views on the proposals.

These proposals have been subject to deliberations with the main education partner bodies represented on the LMS Steering Group, and with the Education Committee.

It is important to note that the illustrative funding outcomes are based on pupil numbers and other school data used for common funding formula purposes in 2008/09. The actual impact of proposed changes for funding in 2009/10 will depend on:

- the overall funding available for distribution to all schools in 2009/10;
and
- the profile of pupils and schools being funded in 2009/10.

Any change to the current funding arrangements will be subject to Ministerial approval and will only be made after careful consideration of the responses to consultation and having regard to the potential impact that the introduction of such changes would have on the budget shares across all schools. Any approved changes would then be implemented for funding allocations from the 2009/10 financial year.

Consultation arrangements

A Response Form is provided to enable your school to submit your views and comments on the proposed changes to the Common Funding Formula. Comments on any other aspects of the current Common Funding Scheme can be submitted using section 2 of the Response Form.

Your school is asked to make a single response, signed on behalf of the Board of Governors, and to forward a completed Response Form to your Funding Authority (see listing below) **on or before the closing date of 12th December 2008.**

You should be aware that, under the current Open Government Code and the Freedom of Information Act, your response to this consultation might be made available, on request, to the public.

Equality Issues

The Department has undertaken an Equality and Human Rights screening exercise on the potential changes in the Common Funding Formula that may be applied from next year. The changes being proposed do not impact on the policy objectives and key principles of Common Funding, namely; funding schools according to relative need and in a way that mitigates against social disadvantage; providing equitable distribution of funding to all schools, irrespective of location; and supporting the policy of early intervention.

It is the Department's view that none of the changes proposed would have an adverse differential impact on equality of opportunity. If you consider that any of the proposals do, or may have, an adverse impact, it would be helpful if you could set out in the Response Form the concerns that you have and why you feel the proposals may have a differential impact on any of the nine Section 75 groups (a full list is available at <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1998/>).

The Department would again like to encourage all schools to take the opportunity to participate in this consultation exercise and to let us have your views using the Response Form.

Please remember that the relevant Funding Authority must receive all responses by the deadline of **12 December 2008**.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roisin Lilley', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Roisin Lilley
Head of Schools Finance Branch

CONTACTS AND RESPONSE RETURNS

Each Funding Authority is consulting directly with its schools, and you should ensure that your response form is submitted to the appropriate contact:

SCHOOL TYPE	Funding Authority (contact details below)
Controlled schools – nursery, primary, secondary (including controlled grammar, controlled integrated and Irish-medium)	appropriate Education & Library Board
Maintained schools – nursery, primary, secondary (including other maintained and Irish-medium)	appropriate Education & Library Board
Voluntary Grammar schools	DE Schools Finance
Grant Maintained Integrated schools	DE Schools Finance

Queries on any aspect of this consultation should be directed to the relevant Funding Authority.

Belfast Education & Library Board Jennifer Henderson LMS Officer Phone: 028 9056 4242 JenniferH@belb.co.uk	North-Eastern Education & Library Board Marbeth Kilpatrick Head of LMS Phone: 028 25 662 370 marbeth.kilpatrick@neelb.org.uk
Southern Education & Library Board Sandra Owens Head of LMS Phone: 028 3751 2508 Sandra.owens@selb.org	South Eastern Education & Library Board Lisa Cross Senior Admin Officer LMS Phone: 028 9056 6337 lisa.cross@seelb.org.uk
Western Education & Library Board Sean Rodgers LMS Finance Officer Phone: 028 82 411 331 sean_rodgers@welbni.org	Department of Education Stephen Duffin Schools Finance Branch Phone: 028 9127 9627 Stephen.duffin@deni.gov.uk

Copies of the Common Funding Scheme, including links to relevant legislation and the Consultation documentation, can be found at the Department of Education website:

www.deni.gov.uk/schools/schools_funding/common_funding_consultations

If the consultation documentation is not in a format that meets your needs, please refer to the appropriate Funding Authority contact (details above), or directly to:

Ken Reid
Schools Finance Branch
Department of Education
Phone: 028 91279665
Email ken.reid@deni.gov.uk