

Consultation Exercise on possible changes to the operation of the Common Funding Formula in 2010/11

Analysis of Consultation Responses

1. A total of 204 schools responded to the consultation exercise, which represents 17.50% of all schools.
2. Below is a summary of the number of schools that responded broken down by Management Type, Phase and Funding Authority.

Management Type and Phase

Management Type/Phase	Total number of Schools	Number of Schools who Responded	Percentage of Schools who Responded
Controlled Nursery	65	18	27.69%
Maintained Nursery	33	2	6.06%
Controlled Primary	404	88	21.78%
Maintained Primary	422	27	6.40%
Controlled Secondary	62	18	29.03%
Maintained Secondary	73	7	9.59%
Controlled Grammar	17	12	70.59%
VGS	52	25	48.08%
GMI Primary	23	3	13.04%
GMI Secondary	15	4	26.67%
All Schools Total	1166	204	17.50%

School Phase

Phase	Total number of Schools	Number of Schools who Responded	Percentage of Schools who Responded
Nursery	98	20	20.41%
Primary	849	118	13.90%
Post-Primary	219	66	30.14%
All Schools Total	1166	204	17.50%

Funding Authority

Funding Authority	Total number of Schools	Number of Schools who Responded	Percentage of Schools who Responded
BELB	134	17	12.69%
NEELB	255	43	16.86%
SEELB	188	51	27.13%
SELB	276	37	13.41%
WELB	223	24	10.76%
VGS	52	25	48.08%
GMI	38	7	18.42%
All Schools Total	1166	204	17.50%

3. A summary of the tick-box responses by all schools to each proposal is contained in the following paragraphs.

AGE WEIGHTED PUPIL UNITS (AWPU) FACTOR

Question 1.1 – Do you agree that the current AWPU weighting of 1.05 that is applied to primary-age pupils should be increased?

Phase	Total Response	Yes	%	No	%	No View	%
Nursery	20	15	75.00	5	25		
Primary	117	109	93.16	8	6.84		
Post-Primary	64	39	60.94	18	28.12	7	10.94
All Schools	201	163	81.09	31	15.42	7	3.48

Question 1.2 – Do you agree that the current AWPU weighting that is applied to primary-age pupils should be increased to 1.06, on the clear basis that an additional £3m will be included within the Aggregated Schools Budget that will be distributed to schools through the Common Funding Formula in 2010/11?

Phase	Total Response	Yes	%	No	%	No View	%
Nursery	20	15	75.00	5	25.00		
Primary	115	51	44.35	62	53.91	2	1.74
Post-Primary	64	46	71.88	17	26.56	1	1.56
All Schools	199	112	56.28	84	42.21	3	1.51

Question 1.3 – Do you agree that the current AWPU weighting that is applied to primary-age pupils should be increased to 1.06, with no additional funding included within the Aggregated Schools Budget that will be distributed to schools through the Common Funding Formula in 2010/11?

Phase	Total Response	Yes	%	No	%	No View	%
Nursery	20			19	95.00	1	5.00
Primary	112	7	6.25	96	85.71	9	8.04
Post-Primary	64	3	4.69	60	93.75	1	1.56
All Schools	196	10	5.10	175	89.29	11	5.61

4. Over 81% of all those schools that responded support the proposal to increase the AWPU weighting for primary school pupils. It is noteworthy that 75% of nursery school respondents and over 60% of post-primary school respondents supported the proposal, whilst clearly indicating in their written comments that any such increase should not be at the expense of any other school phases.

5. Over 53% of primary schools respondents indicated on the tick-box response form that they do not agree with the proposed increase to 1.06. However it is pointed out that virtually all these primary schools have stated in their written comments that the proposed increases to the primary AWPU weighting is not sufficient and should be much greater.

6. A large number of primary schools submitted written comments and a high percentage of these indicated that the proposed increase in the primary AWPU weighting was inadequate/ridiculous/derisory/insulting and needs to be increased to significantly more than 1.06 if primary schools are to have the resources and staffing necessary in order to deliver the Revised Curriculum to the requirements of the Every School A Good School standards. Many of these schools suggested that an increase in the primary AWPU weighting to 1.4 is required.

7. More than 89% of all those schools that responded, including over 85% of primary schools respondents, did not agree with the proposal to increase the AWPU weighting for primary school pupils if the additional funding identified as £3million is not included within the Aggregated Schools Budget.

8. Almost all the written comments from Nursery Schools suggested that the Primary Principals' Release Time factor should be extended to include provision for Nursery School Principals.

FUNDING FOR PREPARATORY PUPILS.

Question 2.1 Do you agree that grant-aid funding for preparatory pupils should be totally withdrawn with effect from 1 September 2010, on the clear basis that this proposal will be subject to the outcome of a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)?

Phase	Total Response	Yes	%	No	%	No View	%
Nursery	19	4	21.05	8	42.11	7	36.84
Primary	117	46	39.32	24	20.51	47	40.17
Post-Primary	65	18	27.69	27	41.54	20	30.77
All Schools	201	68	33.83	59	29.35	74	36.82

9. Over 33% of all those schools that responded support the proposal to totally withdraw grant-aid funding for preparatory pupils with effect from 1 September 2010, while over 29% of respondent schools did not agree with the proposal and over 29% had no view about the matter.

10. There are currently 13 Voluntary Grammar Schools with Preparatory Departments and 12 of these have submitted their views which are summarised as follows:

- An immediate saving of £1.9m but in the long term this will be a cost to the Department. Many Preparatory Departments will be forced to close placing additional financial pressure on the Department (recurrent and capital). Preparatory Departments do not have reserves to meet the costs of Teacher/non-teacher redundancies.
- Closure of some Preparatory Departments could have an adverse effect on local primary schools where there is already a pressure in terms of demand and are there vacant places in local primary schools?
- Is there evidence to suggest that an increase in primary school funding will lead to improved standards in literacy/numeracy?
- AQW 6786/09 – the Minister revealed that a large number of primary schools had accumulated surpluses in excess of £33m, therefore, why is the primary AWPU being increased?
- Timing - September 2010 leaves insufficient time to resolve HR, legal issues.
- The opportunity for Preparatory Departments to consider funding on the same basis as Integrated/Irish medium sector requires more time.
- What will be the status of Preparatory Departments if funding is removed?

11. The South Eastern Education & Library Board is the only Education & Library Board with pupils attending preparatory departments which form part of a controlled grammar school. The Board has provided a comprehensive response to this issue and has pointed out that all three preparatory departments for which it has funding responsibility are also physically accommodated within the existing school buildings and form an integral part of their respective schools.

12. The Board considered that the Department's mooted timetable for the withdrawal of funding with effect from September 2010 was unrealistic, and its imposition would have a significant adverse impact on pupils, parents of pupils attending the preparatory school, teaching and non teaching staff employed in the preparatory departments, alongside the Board's and DE budgets.

13. Written responses to the consultation exercise were received from the North Eastern, South Eastern, Southern, and Western Education and Library Boards; as well as from the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools; the National Association of Head Teachers (NI); the Ulster Teachers' Union; the Governing Bodies Association and the Bursars' Association.

Copies of written responses to the consultation exercise can be made available on request.