



The Castle School

ACHIEVE | BELONG | PARTICIPATE

Wellington Road, Taunton, Somerset TA1 5AU

Tel: (01823) 274073 Fax: (01823) 274080

E-mail: office@castle.somerset.sch.uk

Website: www.castleschool.co.uk



Mrs S Watson
Headteacher

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Dear Parents/Carers

You may remember that I wrote to you previously about the unfair funding of Somerset schools. As you know Somerset is one of the worst funded local authorities in the country. In the table of 150 local authorities, Somerset is 135th for the amount received per pupil for education; we receive at least £3,000 per pupil less than the highest funded areas.

In my last letter I asked you to consider signing a petition to support our local MP in her aim to secure fairer funding for our children. I am delighted to tell you that this was hugely significant in gaining a commitment from the government to implement a national fair funding formula from 2017/18. A national consultation document has been launched which begins this process. The link to the full document is:

https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/schools-national-funding-formula/supporting_documents/Schools_NFF_consultation.pdf

It is likely that there will be strong representation from those areas of the country that are well funded under the current funding arrangements. We need to make sure that the campaign for fairer funding is heard. To this end, I would encourage you to respond to the consultation if you feel able to do so. The online response form can be found here: <https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/schools-national-funding-formula/consultation/intro/view>

You do not need to answer all the questions – just leave blank any that you do not feel able to respond to. I have attached some of my own responses to the consultation in the interests of transparency and to indicate my own feelings on some of the key issues, however, I am quite sure you will have your own views.

My responses focus on ensuring that there is sufficient funding allocated, via the per pupil and lump sum allocations, to run a school and that any top-up “area cost adjustment” (which provides extra funding for the south east) should only relate to the extra teachers’ pay in and around London (the “hybrid” option, not the general labour market option which would perpetuate the current situation).

The deadline for responses to the consultation is 17 April 2016. A second stage consultation will follow (in May) which will contain greater detail. I suspect that the responses received from this first stage consultation will influence this second document significantly.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Watson
Headteacher

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My responses to the questions which have the potential to make the biggest impact to the funding of Somerset schools:

- Q1 Yes
- Q2 Yes
- Q3 Yes – most of the funding should be allocated on this basis
- Q4 Fairer funding means that most is allocated per pupil with free school meals attracting additional funding. This means that every child gets the same regardless of where they live.
- Q5 No
- Q6b No
- Q7 Yes
- Q8 Yes
- Q16b Hybrid methodology – minimal level of top up funding for extra teacher salary costs in the south east
- Q18 Yes