

School Teachers' Review Body (STRB): Remit for the 26th Report - 2016 pay award

Supplementary comments from the Association of School and College Leaders on the evidence provided by statutory consultees

- 1 In addition to the supplementary comments ASCL is submitting jointly with some of the other teacher unions, we are pleased to respond to the evidence provided by the range of statutory consultees with regard to the 26th remit of the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB). We wish to thank the organisations involved for the considerable thought and wisdom demonstrated in their responses.
- 2 The STRB will have noted the consensus from the profession on the real-terms decrease in teachers' pay and the recruitment and retention crisis facing the sector.
- 3 The majority of consultees agreed that schools are facing significant funding difficulties, though we noted the NASUWT's evidence suggested this may not be the case. However, their data relied on historic revenue balances data. Whilst we appreciate that this is the latest statistical information available the following points should be considered:
 - a The current funding system is flawed and the per-pupil value varies by up to £2000 across the country. The revenue balance statistics take no account of this and the balances of those schools in relatively well funded areas mask the true picture.
 - b The pay freeze of 2010-2013 will have made it more likely that a school could post a surplus. For example where the pay bill is £3million a 1% pay-rise costs £30,000. This represents a significant percentage of the average revenue balances between 2010 (39%) and 2014 (25%). This would reduce the average balances to well below the government guidance figures of 5% for secondary and 8% for primary.
 - c The funding landscape has changed dramatically in the current year 2015/16 due to: flat cash; +2.41% on TPS employer contribution (unfunded); +1% pay rise (unfunded). In 2016/17 this will be due to: flat cash and +3.4% class on NI contributions (unfunded).
- 4 In the ASCL School Leaders Survey 2015 over half of schools (55%) said that they are looking to reduce their overall staffing levels in the next 12 months, with 71% citing reduced funding and 62% budget pressures as the reason. Of those looking to make cuts 78% will look to cut teaching posts.
- 5 We welcome the continued widespread support for the principle of maintaining a 'cost of living' award that is separate from 'progression based on performance'. The arguments for maintaining this have been made comprehensively over the last few years and we commend them again to the STRB.

- 6 There was strong support also for the distribution of the pay award to be applied equally to all pay ranges, unlike last year. Consultees have made clear the difficulties faced by schools following last year's recommendations and we urge the STRB to listen to the views of the profession in this matter.
- 7 As last year, there remains strong support for the reintroduction of spine points into the STPCD. ASCL supports this, and believes it would be a valuable non-statutory reference tool for schools that would ensure accuracy and consistency for the large majority of schools that continue to use fixed points. In addition, there is an argument that spine points act as an effective moderator against unaffordable inflationary increases in salaries where there are acute shortages and competition for teachers.
- 8 We have noted that the DfE has again argued that public sector pay restraint has been a key part of fiscal consolidation. However continued pay restraint is making the recruitment and retention of high-class teachers increasingly difficult in a recovering economy. If this approach is continued then the current recruitment and retention crisis will only worsen (please see the evidence submitted to the Education Select Committee on 9th December for further details of the extent of the problem¹). It is therefore our contention that the time has come for a change of direction and that pay awards should reflect the actual market economy and be competitive.
- 9 Schools cannot afford to use the flexibilities now available to them in the STPCD. Future pay awards must be funded in order for schools to attract and retain the best staff. In addition there needs to be a strategic longer term plan put in place that sees the professions' pay made comparable with other graduate professions.
- 10 We look forward to discussing these issues with the STRB on the 16th February.

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¹ <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/education-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/supply-of-teachers-15-16/>
<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/education-committee/supply-of-teachers/written/24691.html>