

SCHOOL FINANCE REGULATIONS 2012

Response of the Association of School and College Leaders

- 1 The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) consists of 15,000 members of the leadership teams of maintained and independent schools, academies and colleges throughout the UK. This places the association in a unique position to see this consultation from the viewpoint of the leaders, including Business Managers, of secondary schools and colleges. We welcome the opportunity to respond to the consultation.
- 2 ASCL recognises the need to ensure stability by carrying over the regulations from last year with minimal change given that any new formula for distribution will not be applied from April 2012. We welcome this decision, not because of any desire to perpetuate the past but because of our previously stated view that significant changes such as a new fairer distribution formula must be properly modelled and introduced in a manner which allows schools to make planned changes to adapt to any significant shift in funding allocation. Making minimal change to the current regulations whilst the results of the national fair funding formula proposals are modelled and developed is sensible and supported.
- 3 ASCL supports the principles behind paragraphs 2 to 5 of the consultation note of reducing work, enabling earlier notification of budgets and protecting schools against rapid and destabilising falls in funding following from formula change.
- 4 The idea of the pupil premium following an excluded pupil is sensible and ASCL supports it. There is however the point that we have made previously that the weak proxy indicator, FSM eligibility last January, is in practice becoming a unique identifier for educational disadvantage. This is a far wider issue than is relevant to this consultation and we will pursue it elsewhere, but note that our current support for the pupil premium following an excluded pupil in this instance does not contradict our wider concerns about the difference between a proxy indicator for a group and the identification of individual students in a school.
- 5 The clarification over the remission of boarding fees is welcome.
- 6 I hope that this is of value to this consultation. No doubt further far more significant changes in regulations will follow decisions over a new distribution formula, and ASCL looks forward to being fully consulted on any such changes.

Martin Ward
Public Affairs Director
Association of School and College Leaders
8 November 2011