



Rt Hon Justine Greening MP
Secretary of State for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

27 July 2017

Dear Secretary of State

**School Teachers' Pay:
Government Proposals following the STRB's 27th Report**

This letter sets out a joint response from our organisations on the above matters. We wish, in making this response, to emphasise the consensus within the teaching profession on the key issues raised by the STRB report and addressed below. As statutory consultees, each of our organisations may also choose to exercise their right to respond independently.

Implementation of STRB Recommendations

The principle of an annual cost of living pay increase, distinct from pay progression, remains critical in order to ensure that teacher pay does not fall further behind in real terms. We are of the view that individual teachers should be entitled to receive a pay increase in line with the uplift to the minimum/maximum of their respective pay range. The role of the STRB is to ensure sufficient quantity and quality of teachers within the profession, and if the annual uplifts are not applied to all teachers and leaders then the pay framework will be further undermined and the current recruitment and retention issues will only worsen. Therefore, we will be jointly advising schools that they should provide all teachers with an increase in line with the STRB recommendations for the relevant pay range and that their pay policies should make this approach clear. However, we call on you to ensure that this is provided for on a mandatory basis in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD).

Pay Levels and Teacher Supply

We welcome the fact that the STRB has once again recognised the major recruitment and retention problems facing schools and the worsening position of teacher pay in real and comparative terms, and has also recognised the link between teacher supply problems and the real terms decline in teachers' pay in recent years.

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The overwhelming strength of the evidence which we submitted jointly and individually to the STRB demonstrated the need for pay to be increased by significantly more than the levels now being recommended by the STRB. Given the pressure on school budgets, if the recruitment and retention crisis is to be addressed then you must either guarantee that all pay increases will be fully funded by the Government or that school budgets will be increased to fully fund all pay rises.

The STRB clearly concurs with our evidence on the impact that the decline in pay has had on teacher supply, as its report notes that schools continue to face substantial pressures with regard to teacher recruitment and retention. With the target for recruitment to ITT having been missed for the fifth successive year, retention rates deteriorating for recent entrants and wastage rates increasing for long-standing teachers, and the number of vacant and temporarily-filled posts rising, it is clear that the Government can no longer deny the severity of the teacher recruitment and retention crisis.

With the value of teacher pay having been slashed in real terms since 2010, the STRB notes that teacher starting pay and profession-wide earnings remain “considerably lower” than for other graduate professions. It believes, correctly, that higher pay is required in order to strengthen the position of teaching in relation to other graduate professions and to address recruitment and retention pressures.

The STRB’s conclusions reflect the points made by our organisations in evidence to the STRB. The evidence overwhelmingly proves the damage being caused by the Government’s failure to maintain the value of teacher pay, with the STRB noting that *“The cumulative impact of these factors creates a real risk that schools will not be able to recruit and retain a workforce of high quality teachers to support pupil achievement”* (STRB, Executive Summary). It is imperative that the Government changes course on teacher pay. The fall in the value of teacher pay is doing real harm and must be reversed.

We are, therefore, disappointed that, in contrast to the STRB’s engagement with these key issues, you did not address them in your Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament.

School Funding

The overall level of funding for schools and academies has been cut in real terms per pupil and this trend is set to continue; and the announcement of additional funding on 17 July makes no provision for the 2017-18 school year to which this pay award will apply. As the STRB notes, without additional monies for 2017-18, funding any annual pay increase will “represent a significant challenge for some school leaders and governing bodies” (STRB, Executive Summary). We believe that the Government should as a matter of policy fully fund the pay increases recommended, and the further pay increases that are clearly needed, including providing additional funding for the Welsh Government to support increases in Wales.

Fairness and Transparency

We wish to reiterate the point that the STPCD should, as a minimum, set out a single set of discretionary pay points to act as a framework for the profession. This is essential to ensure a fair and consistent approach to pay.

The DfE also has a responsibility to promote and ensure clarity, transparency and equality of treatment in school pay decisions, yet currently has no way of monitoring or assessing this. It is critical, therefore, for the DfE to collect more robust information about pay decisions taken by schools in England and Wales, including on pay scales, increases in pay scales and on individual teachers' pay levels and pay progression. This should start immediately, be collected on an annual basis and be discussed with us at a national level.

Process

As has happened for the last two years, the STRB report has been published late in the academic year, leading to an unacceptably short timescale for statutory consultation on the Government's proposals and on the draft STPCD. More importantly, it has also meant that schools have little or no time to prepare for the implementation of changes from September. Indeed, as the STRB recommendations may not be in line with the assumptions that many schools will have made about the level of the pay award, additional work will be needed in those schools to adjust financial plans.

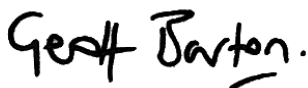
The final STPCD will not now be published until August, with further potential delays before the publication of the Welsh version of the Document. As we pointed out last year, employers are required to consult formally with teachers and their representatives before finalising pay policies and pay scales for September. This consultation cannot now be carried out before the end of the school year and schools will be put under additional pressure as they start the new school year.

Last year we called on you to ensure that such rushed timescales for implementation can be avoided. Regrettably, the pattern has been repeated this year. We again emphasise the problems that this causes and seek a more reasonable timetable in future years for publication of the STRB report, for publication of your response and for the consequent consultation with consultees and within schools.

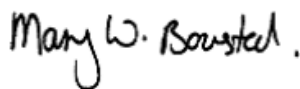
Conclusion

We call on you to listen to the teaching profession. The STRB clearly shares our concerns about teachers' pay and teacher supply, if not all of our conclusions. Urgent and effective action is now needed to address the major problems which are highlighted in its report and in our organisations' evidence to it.

Yours sincerely



**General Secretary
ASCL**



**General Secretary
ATL**



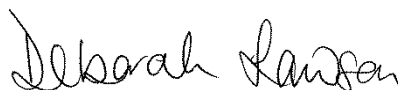
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