

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

Councillor Peter John, OBE
Leader of the Council
Labour Member for South Camberwell Ward
Cabinet Suite, Chief Executive's Department
peter.john@southwark.gov.uk

Tel: 020 7525 7158

10th February, 2017

Ref: Cllr PJ/H8383/jcm

Dear Secretary of State,

We are writing to you to as Southwark representatives to express our serious concern about the proposed National Funding Formula and the impact it will have on schools and students across our area.

The changes to the funding formula proposed by the government will disproportionately hit London and will have a damaging impact on schools in Southwark. Our schools will be among the hardest hit in the country by these funding cuts, which is hugely concerning for the schools and families across Southwark.

London has had extraordinary success in raising school standards in recent years, out-performing the rest of the country. London schools have also made good progress in promoting social mobility, with 48% of young people in London on Free School Meals achieving five good GCSEs, compared with only 36.8% of the same group nationally. In Southwark our schools have made fantastic progress and 93% are now rated good or outstanding. Cutting funding for these schools would be a huge step backwards and risks reversing the improvements that have been made.

Schools in London face unique challenges around deprivation, mobility, a very rapid increase in demand for SEND places and other factors such as higher salary pressures than other areas of the country, based on the high cost of living in the capital. Yet under the proposed National Funding Formula schools in London will have to find savings of £360 million in the first year, the equivalent of 12,857 qualified teachers. Although the government has now proposed a 3% cap of overall funding reductions per pupil, this will be little comfort to parents in London when that cut could mean the loss of a teaching assistant which might have made all the difference to their child's education. It is essential that the NFF recognises and reflects London's needs to avoid a decrease in educational standards.

Every child in the country deserves a great education. Fair funding shouldn't involve a reduction in funding for children in London, but instead a levelling up of schools funding across the country. Nationally, this would cost the government £335m, equivalent to just 1% of the Dedicated Schools Grant. By providing extra investment the government would be giving all schools the tools to match the success story that we have seen in London.

We share the Government's ambition to drive up national standards and to share in the excellence in London schools. But that means we should be committed to a fair funding formula that meets the needs of children and schools across the entire country and recognises that poor children living in disadvantaged areas are still more at risk of underachievement than those living in other parts of the UK.

We would like to meet with you to discuss these issues and our experience in Southwark and to hear what more the Government can do to protect quality education in our borough.

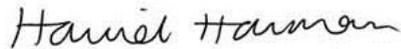
Yours sincerely,



Cllr Peter John, OBE
Leader of Southwark Council



Neil Coyle, MP
Bermondsey and Old Southwark



Rt. Hon. Harriet Harman, MP QC
Camberwell and Peckham



Helen Hayes, MP
Dulwich and West Norwood