

## Secretary of State's Response to the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) Twenty-Eighth Report 2018

### Response of the Association of School and College Leaders

- 1 The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) represents over 19,000 education system leaders, heads, principals, deputies, vice-principals, assistant heads, business managers and other senior staff of state-funded and independent schools and colleges throughout the UK. ASCL members are responsible for the education of more than four million young people in more than 90 per cent of the secondary and tertiary phases, and in an increasing proportion of the primary phase. This places the association in a strong position to consider this issue from the viewpoint of the leaders of schools and colleges of all types.
- 2 ASCL welcomes the opportunity to make a written response to the Government's proposals following the STRB's recommendations to the 28<sup>th</sup> Remit. This submission is in addition to the joint letter we have sent in partnership with the NAHT, NEU, UCAC and Voice.

#### **Matter for recommendation**

***An assessment of what adjustments should be made to the salary and allowance ranges for classroom teachers, unqualified teachers and school leaders to promote recruitment and retention.***

- 3 The STRB's recommendation on the matter was clear: a 3.5 per cent uplift to all pay and allowance ranges for teachers and school leaders. They considered the case for differentiated awards but concluded that there was pressure at all stages.
- 4 We understand that the Government has rejected the STRB's recommendation on the grounds of affordability. Putting the arguments for affordability aside to begin with, this alone does not explain why the Government has ignored the independent experts' opinion that a substantial uplift was required on all pay ranges and allowances in order to '*address deteriorating trends in teacher retention by improving the position of the teachers' pay framework in the labour market for graduate professions*' and why they now propose to differentiate the award.

- 5 Whilst there is no doubt that recruitment remains a significant issue, retention at all levels is pressing, and the Public Accounts Committee Report '*Retaining and Developing the Teaching Workforce*' highlighted the lack of initiatives in this area.
- 6 In addition, when one considers the significant issues facing employers when trying to recruit to the leadership group, which the STRB's report highlighted, it is perverse for the Government to not only propose differentiating the award but to give the lowest increase to the leadership group. The result will be that the recruitment and retention problems at this level will be exacerbated. As good school leadership is key to school improvement, this lack of investment in our children's education is perverse.

**The STRB's recommendations should be implemented in full and there is no case for a differentiated award.**

- 7 The lack of affordability should have come as no surprise to the Government – we have been flagging the funding crisis in schools for some time. The recent policy of expecting schools to be able to fund pay uplifts, increases in employer pension and NI contributions have left schools with no flexibility. This is why we wrote in November 2017 making the case for a fully funded restorative pay award.

**As was usual practice until recent years, pay awards should be funded and arrangements to facilitate this should be made in a timely manner**

- 8 To date, funding has only been announced for schools in England. As the pay arrangements for 2018/19 were for England and Wales we find it staggering that the Department for Education and Welsh Government did not liaise with each other and agree a joint statement on funding. As it stands teachers face a 'national' lottery when it comes to their pay award this year, a situation which is wholly unacceptable.
- 9 Although the devolution of pay to Wales means that this situation will not be able to happen again, we would urge Ministers to recognise the need to learn the lessons of this debacle.
- 10 We also, call on the Treasury and the Welsh Government to work together and to announce as soon as possible what additional funding will be made available to schools in Wales so that employers are able to pass on the pay award with confidence.

**The provision of additional funding for the pay award for Wales should be announced as soon as possible**

- 11 It is encouraging that the Department has recognised the funding crisis being faced by schools and has gone some way to addressing this by providing funding to support this year's pay award. However, the award is only being part funded with schools still being required to meet the first 1% of the award. For many schools this will place them in further financial difficulties.

- 12 We are aware of a significant number of employers who last year only passed on the pay award to staff on the minima and maxima of a pay range due to financial pressures. Unless the awards are fully funded each year this will continue to happen, undermining the pay framework and exacerbating the recruitment and retention crisis.

**Additional funding should be found to ensure that the award is fully funded**

- 13 We understand that the funding for the pay award will be made available via a pay grant. However, the mechanism for this has not been made available as part of the consultation and as such we have not been able to assure ourselves that the arrangements will offer sufficient protection for all schools, regardless of the nature of their provision or structure.
- 14 Moving forward it is essential that schools understand as early in the school term as possible how much money they are going to receive so that they can amend their budgets and make pay awards to their staff. It will then be imperative that the money flows through to them in a timely manner.

**Arrangements for the pay grant should be published as soon as the consultation ends and a mechanism for schools receiving the money should be made so that it is received early in the autumn term.**

- 15 Finally, we must express our sincere regret at the Government's decision to ignore the advice of its own independent review body. The STRB have been hampered in their work in recent years by the artificial pay cap imposed upon them. Then this year, their detailed and expert work and advice for an uplift of equal value on all pay ranges and allowances has been unilaterally overturned. We are left in little doubt as to the lack of real value the Government puts on the work of the STRB when they discount the independent assessment of the evidence and impose their previously stated preferred option. It can therefore come as no surprise that recruitment and retention continue to be such a significant issue.
- 16 If the Government are serious about dealing with the continued and growing crisis in schools then they must allow the STRB a remit to address the issue through the pay framework and to support their findings and recommendations, including by providing any additional funding. To do anything else is to wilfully ignore not only the evidence of the review body and the profession, but all the independent research and reports that have been published, including by the PAC and most recently the EPI.
- 17 We look forward to the next remit being issued, and finalised, in a timely manner.

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