

HONITON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Dear Parent/Carer

Funding Challenges for Honiton Community College

We wish to share with you some serious concerns around the escalating funding pressures facing our school.

For many years Devon has been one of the lowest-funded education authorities in England. In 2016-17 this resulted in a shortfall of £290 per pupil when compared to the national average. This difference in funding for us has an impact of being funded £186,760 less than the average across the UK for 2016/17. This significant funding shortfall has, and will continue to impact, on the quality of the education provision for children in Devon secondary schools.

On Wednesday 14th December 2016 the Secretary of State for Education announced the stage 2 consultation of the national funding formula for schools. We had hoped that this announcement would bring about a readjustment in funding that would be favourable to our school given our historic underfunding. Despite national news headlines which intimated that urban schools were 'losers' and rural schools 'winners', the reality for HCC is that we will see a **0.6% decrease** in our funding by 2019-20. Significant factors in this are the increased weighting that deprivation and prior attainment (Key Stage 2 scores) have within the suggested schools national funding formula. We are not alone in this as the vast majority of the secondary schools in East Devon have also been affected negatively by these national changes.

The legacy of an unsatisfactory funding settlement has been further worsened for our school by rising expenditure demands owing to national policy decisions beyond our control notably those associated with staffing costs.

Honiton Community College Funding Context

1. Fair Funding

Devon received a funding allocation of £4,346 per pupil in 2016-17. The national average was £4,636 which means there is still a shortfall for Devon of £290 per pupil. This difference in funding has an impact of being funded £186,760 less than the average across the UK for 2016/17. This significant funding shortfall has, and will continue to impact, on the quality of the education provision for children at HCC. Over 85% of our budget is associated with staffing linked to a national pay structure and to manage this significant shortfall in funding the loss of some front line staff is inevitable. Whilst I appreciate the government policy on restraint in public sector spending, the gross inequality of education funding across the UK based on local factors, in a system that's dominated by staffing costs with a national structure needed to be urgently addressed.



2. Rising Cost Pressures

Honiton Community College is experiencing a range of costs pressures, which if taken individually could be accommodated but the cumulative effect is significant to the overall funding received by the school. These pressures include:

- General increases in staffing costs including:
 - the impact of the national living wage
 - increases to both the Teachers and NJC Staff pension schemes. (£9,902)
 - increases in National Insurance Contributions (£13,355)
 - national pay structure annual increases (£76,275) including a 1% average pay settlement for teaching staff
- The Reduction in the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) by £33 per student by Devon County Council to address an overspend in High Needs (£21,252)
- The removal of the Education Services Grant from 2017/18 (total funding in 16-17 budget was £56,000)
- The impact of the SEND code of practice and Post 16 & 19 eligibility which has enabled young people with Special Educational Needs to choose to remain in education up until the age of 25, without comparable additional funding.

3. Contingency Reserves

As the above pressures continue to impact on our school the effect is being seen in the level of carry forward being forecast in the future. Whilst we have taken some significant action to alleviate our deficit budget position, our current projections over the next couple of years will dwindle our contingent reserves to nothing.

We are an Ofsted recognised 'good' school, and whilst we will continue to remain committed to looking creatively at trimming costs, we are reaching the point where the impact of cost saving measures will now have a lasting and negative impact on the education of young people. We will start to see a narrowing of the curriculum pre- and post-16, larger class sizes, less in-class support for students and a squeeze on administrative support.

As a school community, we are therefore seeking your valued support in raising awareness of this urgent situation facing our school and to petition on our behalf to the Secretary of State and your local MP (Neil Parrish, Honiton and Tiverton) to consider an urgent solution to mitigate the impact of the present crisis. Beyond the immediate budgetary challenges, we cannot emphasise enough the vital need to respond to the national funding formula consultation to redress the inequalities, deficiencies and flaws in the system and the funding of education more generally.

If you would like any further information or would like to discuss how you could help us raise awareness and support our case for fairer funding then please email the College at admin@honitoncollege.devon.sch.uk.

Yours sincerely



Glenn Smith
Principal