



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Bob Patel MBE
Chair
Association of Sandwell Governing Bodies
c/o SIPS Education Ltd
Guardian House
Cronehills Linkway
West Bromwich
B70 8GS

Our Ref: PM/TW1571

11 March 2019

Dear Mr Patel,

Thank you for your recent letter about school funding. I appreciate you taking the time to get in touch and let me know your views.

I share the concerns expressed in your letter. I am aware that secondary schools, in particular, are finding it increasingly difficult to set balanced budgets with many running an in-year deficit in Sandwell; however, there are also acute pressures on the borough's primary schools.

The Tories have cut billions of pounds from our schools, which have seen their budgets falling for the first time in a generation. As you point out in your letter, this has led to schools having to take drastic measures, such as reducing the number of teaching and support staff, delaying building maintenance and reducing the range of subjects available to pupils. The Tories are trying to say that austerity is over, but the reality is that schools are still facing a funding crisis after more than eight years of deep and damaging cuts.

I hope I can reassure you that the next Labour government will invest in a National Education Service, end Tory cuts to our schools and increase per pupil funding in real terms. As part of our plans, we will also introduce a fairer funding formula that leaves no school worse off, while

redressing the historical underfunding of certain schools.

In addition, I will continue to fight for the overall schools budget to be increased and speak out against the government's cuts.

As requested in your letter, I have written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond MP, to lobby him on the issue of school funding ahead of his Spring Statement, the Budget later in the year and the comprehensive spending review. I will, of course, let you know as soon as I receive a reply.

In the meantime, if there are any other issues that you wish to bring to my attention please do not hesitate to get back in touch, by telephoning my office on 0121 569 1904, or by emailing me at tom.watson.mp@parliament.uk.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Watson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Tom Watson
Member of Parliament for West Bromwich East