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NASUWT THE TEACHERS' UNION

Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

MATT WRACK
GENERAL SECRETARY

Dear Andy,

Congratulations on taking up position as Prime Minister, we look forward to working with your team to improve education.

Schools, teachers and others face many challenges as we seek to make schools and colleges ready for the future.

I set out below ten steps which could be taken rapidly, which would demonstrate a clear comitment to invest in education and to fully engage with those who deliver it.

1. School funding and workforce renewal

Commit to increase school funding over the remainder of the Parliament to at least 6% of GDP and ensure that all teacher pay awards are fully funded. Establish a national workforce commission to develop a long-term strategy for teacher recruitment, retention and reward. This should include a commitment to restoring competitive teacher pay, reducing excessive workload and ensuring schools have the resources needed to meet the needs of their communities.

2. National pay and conditions

Require all state-funded schools, including academies and free schools, to comply with the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document as a minimum entitlement. National pay and conditions must apply to all teachers, regardless of the type of school in which they work, ensuring fairness, consistency and portability across the education system and preventing a fragmented workforce.

3. Pay progression reform

Remove statutory and contractual links between performance management and pay progression and restore automatic annual progression through the main and upper pay ranges. The threshold application process should be abolished and the current U1, U2 and U3 structure replaced with M7, M8 and M9 to create a clear, transparent and equitable pay framework for all teachers.

4. Trade union recognition and industrial relations

Require all state-funded schools, academy trusts and college employers to establish formal trade union recognition agreements that provide for meaningful consultation and negotiation on workforce matters. Government should promote TUC principles of good industrial relations and ensure that teachers and school staff have a recognised voice in decisions affecting pay, workload, wellbeing and professional practice.

5. Workload reduction and treating teachers as professionals

Give a clear commitment to negotiate with teacher and education unions on a national workload reduction agreement and require all school and college employers to work in with recognised unions to implement measures that reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and administrative burdens. Every teacher in every school must benefit from a fair and supportive approach to performance management that respects and enhances their status as highly skilled professionals. This should include measures to end the abuse of capability procedures, support plans and referencing policies.

6. SEND

Commit to a fully funded SEND guarantee so that every school has timely access to specialist assessment, external services and additional staffing, ensuring that adequate funding, time and workforce capacity are in place in every setting.

7. Ofsted and school accountability

Replace Ofsted with a new improvement-focused accountability body, ending high-stakes graded judgements and forced academisation triggers, with inspection required to assess staff workload and wellbeing and to hold bodies running educational settings, local services and national government to account for the conditions affecting schools.

8. School system reform

Withdraw the ambition for every school to join a multi-academy trust and instead work with NASUWT, other education unions, local authorities, parents and legitimate stakeholders to develop a coherent, democratically accountable school system. Work must begin to strengthen collaboration between schools without forcing structural change, protect national pay and conditions and ensure that bodies responsible for all state schools are subject to transparent local and national accountability.

9. Behaviour and school safety

Commit to a national behaviour and school safety plan to ensure that teachers can teach and pupils can learn in safe, calm, tolerant and inclusive environments. Government must ensure that employers are required to act when incidents occur and that staff are properly supported afterwards. This plan should be backed by more investment in SEND, mental health, counselling, early intervention and wider children's services.

10. Tackling profiteering in education

Introduce measures to ensure that public funding is directed towards teaching and learning rather than excessive private gain. This should include greater transparency and accountability over executive pay, consultant spending, supply agency charging practices and the use of private providers within the education system. Government should review where public money is being diverted away from pupils and ensure that resources are used to support educational outcomes and workforce investment.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these steps with you and your team at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

Matt Wrack

Matt Wrack
General Secretary