Dear Colleague,

**Educational Excellence Everywhere**

I am writing about our education white paper, *Educational Excellence Everywhere*, which was published yesterday.

Since 2010, our education reforms, underpinned by the hard work of teachers and head teachers, have tackled many of the challenges facing our education system. We are seeing rising academic standards and more pupils being taught in schools rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted.

Despite this progress, our education system does not yet consistently compare well with those of other leading countries. Many of our schools are now excellent, but standards are still too low in some areas of the country.

The white paper sets out our plan to achieve educational excellence everywhere, based on evidence of successful approaches in this country and from around the world. We want to extend and embed the reforms introduced in the last Parliament to provide a world class education for all children, wherever they live and whatever their circumstances.

The white paper sets out how we will give schools, teachers, head teachers and the education profession the power, incentives and accountability to help ensure that every child receives an excellent education. The generation of teachers working in our schools today are some of the best qualified in our history; the reforms in the white paper will extend to them the same freedoms enjoyed by other professions such as law and medicine. At the same time, we will equip parents with the information they need to play an active role in their children’s education.
We will build a school-led system, which rewards innovation, spreads excellence and tackles underperformance. The principle of 'supported autonomy' is at the heart of our approach: every school will benefit from the autonomy which comes with academy status, and the support needed to use these freedoms effectively. The system will respond to performance: extending the reach of the most successful headteachers and acting promptly by intervening where performance is not good enough.

The key elements of our approach are:

- an education system that ensures teachers receive the respect they deserve and that we have consistently excellent teaching in our classrooms, including replacing the current ‘Qualified Teacher Status’ (QTS) with a stronger, more challenging accreditation based on a teacher's effectiveness in the classroom, as judged by great schools;

- support for existing leaders and help to develop the outstanding head teachers of the future through improved leadership training, world-class qualifications and attracting the best teachers to challenging areas, including through the new National Teaching Service;

- a dynamic school-led system in which every school is an academy and pupils, parents and communities are empowered to have a more significant voice in schools, with a clearly defined role for local government;

- preventing underperformance through support where it is needed, including transferring responsibility for school improvement from local authorities to the best school leaders. There will also be a new focus on achieving excellence in areas where academic standards are too low, and there are not yet enough high quality teachers, school and system leaders, governors or sponsors;

- high expectations and a world-leading curriculum for all, so that all children receive an education that equips them with the knowledge and character traits necessary to succeed in 21st century Britain;

- fair, stretching accountability that focuses on tackling underperformance; rewarding schools on the basis of the progress their pupils make and incentivising strong leaders to take over
underperforming schools;

- and the right resources in the right hands: investing every penny where it can do the most good – through a new, fair, national funding formula for schools, improved effectiveness of the pupil premium and making the best possible use of resources.

Fundamental to that is our ambition that, by the end of 2020, all schools will be academies or in the process of becoming academies, and by the end of 2022, local authorities will no longer maintain schools.

We expect that most schools will be part of Multi Academy Trusts (MATs), providing significant benefits including staffing and leadership opportunities, more efficient back office arrangements that free up more funding for the classroom, more robust governance and the opportunity to develop excellent practice and curriculum in a way that can also reduce workload.

To achieve this vision, we will continue to encourage high performing maintained schools to put forward applications to become academies. And we are implementing measures in the new Education and Adoption Act which received Royal Assent this week, so that all inadequate schools become sponsored academies, and coasting schools are tackled for the first time.

We will expect local authorities to facilitate the conversion of maintained schools into academies, and play an active part with schools and dioceses, where relevant, in developing and shaping the system. Regional Schools Commissioners, supported by their head teacher boards, will consider and agree these arrangements on behalf of the Secretary of State. The department will publish evidence on the characteristics of successful MATs, including issues such as size and pupil numbers. This will explain the basis on which RSCs will expect to approve MATs, and single academy trusts where schools can demonstrate they will be successful and sustainable standing alone.

We will also be legislating for new powers to direct schools to become academies in local authority areas which are underperforming, where the local authority no longer has capacity to maintain its schools, or where schools have not started the process of becoming an academy by April 2020. This process will be complete by the end of 2022, by which point local authorities will no longer maintain any schools.

The move to a system in which all schools are academies clearly means that
the role of local authorities will change. As responsibilities related to maintaining schools fall away, local authorities will retain important functions in support of the school system: ensuring every child has a school place, ensuring the needs of vulnerable pupils are met and acting as champions for all parents and families. Local authorities’ core functions relating to social care, economic development, housing and planning will also mean they have a continuing interest in the success of local schools.

I hope that the plans presented in this white paper will offer you, and all other maintained schools, opportunities to extend your success and to strengthen your school for the future. This Government is committed to securing educational excellence everywhere for all children. I look forward to working with you to achieve that vital objective.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Gibb MP