



Department
for Education

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Review of Efficiency in the Schools System

Review of Efficiency in the Schools System

As part of the Budget Statement 2013, the Government announced that it would conduct a review of school efficiency. To inform that review we have launched a call for evidence to learn more about how schools make financial decisions and the techniques that they find particularly useful.

We also want to hear your opinions and ideas of how schools can improve their efficiency.

The call is open to anyone to respond. In particular, we would like to hear directly from the people that are involved in these decisions on a day to day basis. The results of the call for evidence will form part of a report on efficiency in schools which will be published in June 2013.

To Schools, School Budget Managers, HTs, Teachers, Governors, Parents, Representative Organisations, Unions, Local Authorities

Issued 10 April 2013

Enquiries To If your enquiry is related to the content of the document you can contact the Department on 0370 000 2288

e-mail: SchoolEfficiency.REVIEW@education.gsi.gov.uk

Contact Details

If you have a query relating to the consultation process you can telephone: 0370 000 2288 or use the ['Contact Us'](#) page.

1 Review of school efficiency

- 1.1 Schools spend a large amount of public money every year, and how they spend it matters. That is why the Department for Education is conducting a review of the level of efficiency in the schools system, with particular focus on how schools can maximise the resources available to them. We intend to publish the review in late June.

For the purposes of this review, efficiency is about the relationship between spending decisions and outcomes, and ensuring that limited resources are used to the best possible effect.

In order to understand better how this relationship works in practice, we would like to hear directly from the people that are involved in these decisions on a day to day basis. This call for evidence is a key plank of the review and is our opportunity to feed in the views of teachers, governors, school business managers, parents, local authorities and anyone with an interest in the education system to have their say about school spending. In particular we want to know more about:

- How financial decisions are made in schools and who makes them;
- The tools and techniques that schools have found particularly effective in achieving greater efficiency; and
- Whether the right incentives are in place for schools to use their resources more efficiently.

This call for evidence will be open between 10 April and 10 May 2013. You can respond electronically through the online response facility available on the Department for Education e-consultation website.

2 Financial decision making

- 2.1 We know that how decisions are taken and who takes them can be important parts of a school's efficiency strategy.

Q1: How, and by whom, are decisions made about the allocation of resources in your school? What type of information or evidence is used to support these decisions?

Q2: How effectively do current budget-setting practices ensure that school spending decisions minimise costs and maximise educational outcomes?

Q3: Does your school use any approaches that you feel are particularly innovative and effective in improving efficiency? If so, what are these?

Q4: If any, what specialist skills or knowledge are needed by schools' decision makers? Do you feel decision makers in your school are equipped with these?

3 Tools and techniques

3.1 Tools such as the schools financial benchmarking website or edubuy aim to support schools to achieve value for money. However we know that there is plenty of innovative practice in individual schools that can be extended to the rest of the sector, and that it can cover any area of school spending.

Q5: What tools or techniques does your school currently use to inform its spending decisions? If any, how effective do you think they are?

Q6: How effective are the specific tools provided by the Department for Education¹? How could these be improved?

Q7: Are there any new tools – or additional information – that you feel would improve schools' ability to make better decisions and improve their efficiency?

4 Incentives and influences

4.1 We want to understand more about what drives the decisions that schools make:

Q8: What internal incentives do financial decision-makers in schools face when making decisions? Which incentives are particularly strong (or weak)?

Q9: Are there any particular barriers or disincentives that hinder a school's ability to change or improve the effectiveness of their spending decisions? If so, what are these?

Q10: What, if any, external incentives, influences or opinions are important in actually affecting schools' spending decisions?

¹ More information about the tools that the DfE provide can be found at the following link: <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/financialmanagement/b0069984/vfm>

Q11: What would strengthen schools' incentives to use their resources more efficiently?

Q12: For what reasons, if any, do schools build up their reserves? How has your school used reserves in the past?

If you have further views about school efficiency that you would like to share, please do include them in your response. There will be a space for additional comments at the end of the response form.

5 How To Respond

5.1 Consultation responses can be completed online at www.education.gov.uk/consultations

by email to: SchoolEfficiency.REVIEW@education.gsi.gov.uk

or by downloading a response form which should be completed and sent to:

Bonnie Wang
Funding Policy Unit - 4th Floor
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

6 Additional Copies

6.1 Additional copies are available electronically and can be downloaded from the Department for Education e-consultation website at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations>

7 Plans for making results public

7.1 The results of the consultation and the Department's response will be published on the DfE e-consultation website in early summer 2013.