



**Confederation  
of School Trusts**

**Future shape of the  
school system in  
England**  
Towards a sector-led  
'white paper'

**Call for evidence**



**CST is launching a call for evidence so that we can develop a sector-led white paper on the future shape of the education system in England.**

**Opening date:** 13<sup>th</sup> June 2019

**Closing date:** 30<sup>th</sup> July 2019

**Ways to respond:**

Email us at [admin@cstuk.org.uk](mailto:admin@cstuk.org.uk)

Complete the survey at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/56NF9BL>

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**By the Confederation of School Trusts (CST)**

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[www.cstuk.org.uk](http://www.cstuk.org.uk)

**The Voice of School Trusts**

**Selflessness | Integrity | Objectivity | Accountability | Openness | Honesty | Leadership**

Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee, Registered in England, Charity Number 1107640, Company Number 05303883  
VAT Registration Number 270 0880 18

*CST's mission is to build an excellent education system in England, with every school part of a strong and sustainable group in which every child is a powerful learner and adults learn and develop together as teachers and leaders.*

*Our vision is a system which holds trust on behalf of children.*

## **1. One system**

*State of play:* Right now, we have two systems – a system of stand-alone schools maintained by local authorities and a system of legally autonomous schools many of which operate as a group in a single governance structure. There is no clear role for local government, which is currently a provider of schools among other providers.

*The future:* All schools in a strong and sustainable group working together in a single governance structure. There is a clear role for local government, not as a provider but as the democratic body; using their strategic capability and capacity to support the local education system and exercising statutory scrutiny of the local system.

*Why:* A two-tier system is expensive and confusing. There is now stronger evidence that groups of schools working together in a single governance structure are educationally and financially stronger.

*Do you agree that we should:*

- Provide financial incentives for schools to form or join a school trust, speed up the process and cap the cost of converting schools. No school should be left behind.
- Ensure strong governance in all school trusts by recruiting and training a new cadre of professional governance experts.
- Pass legislation which allows intervention at trust-level not just at school-level.
- Consolidate in legislation the statutory roles we want local government to have, for example, it should be the champion of all children, particularly the most vulnerable, it should ensure that there is a good place for every child, that all civic actors in the local system work together to ensure the value of the child, and that our collective actions protect high-quality education.
- Identify a clear role for local government to exercise democratic oversight by putting education scrutiny of the local school system on a statutory footing.
- Create and fund local education commissioning groups (ECGs) where local authority and school leaders commission community support services.

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## 2. Teacher professionalism

*State of play:* Up until recently, we have not agreed on a body of knowledge that supports teaching as a profession. Teacher training has not been underpinned consistently by an agreed body of knowledge and the ethical formation of the teacher as a professional during initial teacher education is under-developed. There is significant variation in the development of teachers post-qualifying and not all teachers have access to the type of activities and processes most likely to impact positively on their practice and pupil outcomes. The publication of the Early Career Framework supported by a body of knowledge and evidence affirmed by the Education Endowment Foundation is a significant step to correct this, as is the establishment of a professional body for teachers.

*The future:* There is a well-established body of knowledge which supports initial teacher education, induction and post-qualifying professional development. There is broad agreement about what teachers should know and be able to do and ambitious curricula through initial training and early career development. Post-qualifying, school trusts harness the best evidence-informed processes and practices to create professional development curricula in which teachers and leaders learn together. An ethical framework is embedded at all stages of teacher development. A strong professional body sets professional standards.

*Why:* Established professions typically have a body of knowledge, an ethical framework and a strong professional body that sets standards.

*Do you agree that we should:*

- Build on the underpinning knowledge of the Early Career Framework to establish a curriculum for initial teacher education and early career development (underway).
- Implement a rigorous designation process and quality assure Appropriate Bodies, organisations responsible for the quality assurance process for newly qualified teacher (NQT) induction.
- Commission a best-evidence review to support all school trusts to create professional development curricula in which teachers and leaders learn together.
- Unlock the apprenticeship levy to pay for professional qualifications.
- Widen the remit of the Education Endowment Foundation to support and disseminate best evidence through research syntheses, meta-reviews and reviews.
- Embed the Ethical Framework in initial teacher education, early career and post-qualifying professional development.
- Review the teacher and leadership standards.

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### 3. Curriculum

*State of play:* Up until recently, most schools followed the national curriculum. In 2010, legislation was passed to give school trusts curriculum freedoms. Arguably this together with renewed interest in curriculum from bottom-up research movements and more recently, the new Ofsted framework has reinvigorated curriculum debate. But this debate is currently unhelpfully divisive.

*The future:* School trusts have clearly articulated education philosophies. They harness the best evidence on curriculum design and implementation so that every pupil can access an ambitious curriculum that clearly articulates and sequences the essential knowledge, skills and attributes that they need to be educated citizens. The curriculum introduces pupils to the best knowledge we have and helps to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement. This entitlement is not limited on grounds of perceived ability, ethnicity, class or gender.

*Why:* The curriculum is increasingly understood to be the driver and guarantor of equity, giving everyone what they need to be successful taking children and young people beyond their experience.

Do you agree that we should:

- Build an evidence-informed consensus about curriculum design that drives equity.
- Re-introduce curriculum design into initial teacher education so that early career teachers know and understand how their subject specialism fits into an overall philosophy of education, curriculum intent and design principles.
- Commission a professional qualification in curriculum design and implementation.

### 4. Funding

*State of play:* The existing school funding system allocates money inconsistently across English schools. Funding pressures, particularly between 2010 and 2017-18 are creating burdens. It is difficult for school trusts to spend their apprenticeship levy. We need strategic investment in education for the system to take the next step up.

*The future:* School trusts are funded in a sufficient, equitable and sustainable way. Early intervention, prevention and support services are enough to meet local need and are commissioned through Education Commissioning Groups (ECGs – see above).

*Why:* Inconsistent distribution and funding pressures are creating a problem across the system and lack of strategic investment has stalled reforms.

Do you agree that we should:

- Set out a timeline for passing legislation to implement the National Funding Formula and make funding available to manage the transition to the new formula.

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- Consolidate the teacher pay and pensions grants into the Schools Block of the NFF.
- Increase the quantum at least to match spending per pupil in 2015/16 and commit to keep per-pupil funding in line with inflation and cost-pressures.
- Raise the rate of post-16 funding.
- Research regional and sub-regional patterns of SEND provision and best values in commissioning and increase the quantum of the high needs block.
- Initiate comprehensive research into the quality of alternative provision and consult on how such services should be funded and commissioned in the future.
- Secure funding for strategic investment to build capacity of school trusts to grow, grow the right school trusts in the right places and incentivise spin-out trusts.
- Create financial incentives to local authorities to help schools to group, speed up the process and cap the costs of conversion.

## 5. Accountability

*State of play:* Oversight of the school system in England has changed significantly in recent years. Previously, local authorities had oversight of the local school system and, since 2006, powers to intervene in underperforming schools. But the historic roles of local of employer, improver and regulator of maintained schools are in conflict. This led to the rather odd situation where the local authority exercised the improvement role and then intervention into itself and its own improvement activity. 2014 saw the introduction of regional school commissioners (RSCs) to exercise oversight over the rapidly growing sector of legally autonomous school trusts, advised by Head Teacher Boards. The RSC role was expanded in 2015 to include responsibility for approving the conversion of underperforming-maintained schools into academies and deciding on their sponsors. Local authorities, Ofsted, the RSCs - and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) - now form part of an increasingly complicated and expensive system of oversight, regulation and inspection.

*The future:* There is a single regulator. Separately from the regulator, there is an independent inspectorate. The regulator and inspectorate have clearly articulated authority, decision-making powers, legitimacy and accountability.

- School trusts are the employers and improvers (the providers) accountable to the communities they serve through strong trust boards;
- Local government is the scrutineer of the local education system;
- The regulator intervenes; and
- Ofsted inspects.

The spaces of improvement, scrutiny, regulation and inspection are clearly distinguishable.

*Why:* The current system is expensive and confusing. Clarity of function and purpose is essential if the system is to be coherent.

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*Do you agree that we should:*

- Stand down the Governance Handbook and publish in its place a Good Governance Standard for School Trusts, clearly articulating the duties of trustees and using the Financial Reporting Council's 'comply or explain' model.
- License and grant-fund successful school trusts as providers of school improvement while the system makes the transition to strong and sustainable groups.
- Create a single regulator by bringing the regulatory functions of the RSCs and ESFA together.
- As above, strengthen regulation by passing primary legislation to allow intervention at trust level.
- As above, put local education scrutiny on a statutory footing.
- Strengthen the appeals system against a poor inspection.

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