

SCHOOLS NorthEast weekly update

The future of our region is in school

This week...

Following on from last week's news that spending cuts were looming, Ed Balls has said that schools are facing £2billion in cutbacks, including plans to axe 3,000 senior staff posts, most of them deputy heads. The education minister became the first in the cabinet to set out how the cuts Gordon Brown publicly conceded were needed would be made, as it was revealed that civil servants across Whitehall have been instructed to be ruthless in slashing budgets.

Mr Balls has been accused of making an extraordinary U-turn after saying six months ago that education spending would be ring fenced against cuts. He said the £2bn could be achieved through merging comprehensive schools into "federations", with one overall head taking charge of up to six secondaries.

He told the Sunday Times: "It is going to be tougher on spending over the next few years. You might have a Head Teacher and a team of deputy heads working across the different schools. But we are not going to have larger class sizes."

Mr Balls added that cutting the cost of heating, lighting and repairs to schools by 10 per cent could also save up to £800m a year. Capping pay rises from 2011, and forcing schools to spend money in reserve are also part of the cost-cutting plan.

Where would you make savings if you had to cut £2bn from the school budget? Let us know your thoughts at think@schoolsnortheast.com.

SCHOOLS NorthEast EPIC Summit 2009

With less than three weeks to go until the SCHOOLS NorthEast EPIC Summit time is running out to book your place for a unique event that will allow you to connect not only with other schools in the region, but also with the business world.

The Summit is being held on 8 October in the beautiful surroundings of Wynyard Hall in County Durham, and features sessions and presentations from organisations including Pebble, who offer expert advice on accessing funding, and Texas Instruments, who will be demonstrating the technology that your school could be using in the very near future.

Remember if you cannot make it on the day, there are great discounts available if you book a place for somebody else from your school. Simply visit www.schoolsnortheast.com/summit for more information or to sign up now.

News and events

School Food Trust – Million Meals stay-on-site guide

The SCHOOLS NorthEast EPIC Summit 2009 will be sponsored by the School Food Trust and the Million Meals campaign and in the build up to the Summit, each week we will be looking at one aspect of the work the School Food Trust does in more detail.

The School Food Trust is supporting the introduction of stay-on-site policies to encourage healthier eating and ensure more children have access to high quality school food. Where implemented after proper consultation with pupils, parents, staff and governors, a stay-on-site policy offers an opportunity to improve pupils' diets.

Introducing a stay-on-site policy can be a big change for pupils and staff alike, so a useful guide providing information on introducing a stay-on-site policy, along with case studies of where policies have been successfully implemented, is now available on the Million Meals website.

If your school hasn't yet signed up to Million Meals, you can by clicking [here](#) - all you need is your URN number. The benefits of signing up include gaining access to a panel of experts who can answer any queries you have, as well as a range of case studies, films, details of visits to member schools and a host of other resources.

Tyne & Wear Museums teacher events

Tyne & Wear Museums have three events coming up soon which are available to teachers and learning professionals from around the region.

- **Beyond the School Walls** will be held at Northumberland Museum, Archives and Country Park on 29 September from 4:30pm til 6:30pm. The event is designed to allow teachers to meet education and learning staff from a range of cultural venues and find out more about opportunities to enhance and enrich learning across the curriculum through visits. It is free but places are limited so booking is essential.
- **Into the 7th Dimension** will be held at The Bowes Museum on 14 October. It is a day-long conference exploring the latest developments in art and design education. The conference features presentations and practical workshops, and looks at how museums and galleries can support and enhance the art and design curriculum. Again this is a free event but booking is essential.
- **Sense of Place** will be held at Preston Hall Museum on 19 November. It is a free day-long conference exploring how partnership working between museums and teachers can ensure that history plays a central role in promoting an exciting curriculum. Once again booking is essential.

To book your place onto any of the three events contact the Hub Learning Team on (0191) 263 9860 or email hubblearning@twmuseums.org.uk.

Working More Effectively with Young People training sessions

Fairbridge Training will be holding three training sessions in Middlesbrough designed to allow delegates to build skills, gain confidence and help develop strategies to engage and move young people forwards. Delegates will cover subjects such as:

- Increasing understanding of behaviour
- Developing techniques to positively work with young people displaying difficult and challenging behaviour
- Understanding needs analysis, goal setting and review

The sessions will be held on 1 October (Working with difficult behaviour), 15 October (Working one-to-one) and 22 October (Working with groups). Each day costs £150+VAT per person, which includes refreshments, lunch and a resource kit. For more information or to book a place call (02079) 021 536 or email yaw.boateng@fairbridgetraining.co.uk.

2010 GCSE changes

GCSE Maths, English and ICT are being redeveloped for new teaching in 2010, and in preparation Edexcel and AQA are holding a series of free events full of information on the new exams. There will be a selection of face-to-face and online events running around the country from October.

Edexcel will reach the North East with several sessions in Darlington throughout the day on 15 October. For more information and to book your place go to www.edexcel.com/gcse10.

Meanwhile AQA will be holding a conference to get ready for the new maths exams in Newcastle the next day on 16 October. For more information and to book a place go to www.2010ready.aqa.org.uk/mathsevents.

Assessment and Monitoring in Turbulent Times CEM conference

As we reported last week, SCHOOLS NorthEast members can receive an exclusive discount when they sign up for the Assessment and Monitoring in Turbulent Times conference being run by the CEM centre on 10 November.

More information can be found at www.cemcentre.org, where you can also book your place. Simply quote the promotional code **SNE-091110** to claim your exclusive SCHOOLS NorthEast discount.

Innovation in Education Conference

The Innovation Unit are working alongside EducationGuardian to present the Innovation in Education conference at Park Plaza Victoria, London, on 9 November, with confirmed speakers including SCHOOLS NorthEast Patron Lord Puttnam and North East Head Teachers Paul Kelley (Monkseaton High School) and Derek Wise (Cramlington Learning Village) as well as a wide range of speakers from around the world.

If you book before 30 September you can receive a 20% early bird discount. The full programme can be downloaded in PDF format by clicking [here](#). For more information and to book, click [here](#) to visit the conference website. Quote **IU** when booking to guarantee your place.

Sustainable schools

NESPSS are continuing to collect feedback from schools on their use of the Sustainable Schools S3 Self Evaluation Tool, which can be accessed by clicking [here](#). If you feel as though you could help with this research please email rich.hurst@durhamlearning.net

News round-up

John Dunford, General Secretary of ACSL, wrote in the TES this week that apart from the economy, education will be the key issue in the forthcoming general election. He pointed out that it is no coincidence that all three major political parties have bright young education spokesmen and that all are close to their respective party leaders. He also brought up the question of why health has a chief medical officer, science has a chief scientific officer, agriculture has the chief veterinary officer, yet education has no dedicated authoritative voice. You can read the full story by clicking [here](#).

Also this week, Victoria Derbyshire was discussing the difficulty that some pupils find in moving from primary to secondary school on her Radio 5 Live phone-in. The BBC's Paul Greer wrote a fascinating follow up piece looking at the way that taking pupils out of the classroom and engaging in activities that allow young people to mingle with their new classmates can work wonders in raising their self esteem. The full article can be found by clicking [here](#).

If you have had a similar success story then we would love to hear from you. Simply send us an email at think@schoolsnortheast.com.

Regional News

- [School milestone in Danica's long road to recovery](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Teacher training programme praised by Ofsted](#) (Evening Gazette)
- [School celebrates centenary](#) (News Post Leader)
- [School kids celebrate Heritage open days](#) (News Post Leader)
- [We want to stay put, say parents](#) (Sunderland Echo)

- [‘Awesome’ school opens](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [Popular teacher dies aged 59](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [Schools and homes bring home the gold](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [St Paulinus reunion buffet serves up £1,000 for Jamie](#) (Evening Gazette)

School budget cuts

- [Labour ‘could save schools £2bn’](#) (BBC News)
- [Schools forced to find £2bn in public spending cuts](#) (Guardian)
- [Minister reveals huge school cuts](#) (Independent)
- [Teachers angry after Balls says he will cut 3,000 senior posts](#) (Independent)
- [I can cut schools budget by £2billion, says Ed Balls](#) (Daily Mail)
- [Ed Balls sets out school savings to strike blow in battle of the cuts](#) (Guardian)
- [‘We won’t cut. Absolutely nothing is more important’](#) (TES)

Other politics news

- [More evidence, fewer policies, less meddling](#) (TES)
- [This will be the education election](#) (TES)
- [Lib Dems will ring-fence education cash](#) (TES)
- [Conservatives will not protect independent schools, report warns](#) (Times)

Sats

- [Unions considering Sats boycott](#) (BBC News)
- [10,000 sign petition to scrap Sats](#) (Guardian)
- [Was the government to blame for the Sats marking fiasco?](#) (Guardian)
- [Ed Balls had early warning of Sats exam marking fiasco](#) (Guardian)
- [10,000 call for axing of KS2 Sats](#) (TES)

School bonus culture

- [‘Bonus culture’ entering schools](#) (BBC News)
- [Bonus culture ‘infecting’ state education](#) (Guardian)
- [Bonus culture ‘creeping into schools’](#) (Daily Telegraph)

School security

- [Police knife searches in schools will be routine](#) (TES)
- [Police clampdown on parent parking](#) (TES)

Exams

- [Older style exams back with tougher GCSEs](#) (Daily Mirror)
- [GCSEs can be dropped for ‘tougher exams’](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Exam-season script in need of a happy ending](#) (TES)
- [A* divide crying out for something Special](#) (TES)

Technology in schools

- [Ban mobile phones in nurseries, says union](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Tech addiction ‘harms learning’](#) (BBC News)
- [Mobile free zones](#) (TES)

History teaching

- [Pupils 'spend too little time on Holocaust'](#) (Guardian)
- [Holocaust left out](#) (TES)
- [History collecting dust in academies](#) (TES)

Private schools

- [Private schools 'will have to raise class sizes'](#) (Guardian)
- [Parents being priced out of private schools](#) (Daily Telegraph)

Primaries

- [School exams 'taking joy out of childhood'](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Why are primary schools so Victorian?](#) (Guardian)
- [Primary schools bring in bankers to teach the credit crunch children](#) (Times)

Academies

- [Local authorities unable to save failing academies](#) (TES)

Personal tutors

- [Ed Balls: personal tutors for 300,000 pupils](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Intensive tuition](#) (TES)

Teacher prejudice

- [How parents' behaviour can get their children branded troublemakers at school](#) (Daily Mail)
- [Prejudiced teachers too quick to brand children 'naughty'](#) (Independent)
- [Why children get trapped in the naughty corner at school](#) (Guardian)

School building

- [Finding the best size for school](#) (BBC News)

League tables

- [Scrap school league tables, say experts](#) (Daily Telegraph)

School funding

- [Fear of rising class sizes as schools face funding deficit](#) (Guardian)

Teachers

- [Unions to fight Tory plans to let 'free schools' set teachers' pay](#) (Times)
- [The 50 hours-plus profession](#) (TES)
- [Poll: half of teachers fear Facebook](#) (TES)
- [Ofsted insights to boost black and minority ethnic teachers to top](#) (TES)

Other education news

- [Marcus Hayward dreams of becoming a primary teacher](#) (Guardian)
- [The school that makes sure no one gets left behind](#) (Guardian)
- [School hails classical music toilet scheme for pupil behaviour boost](#) (Daily Mirror)

- [Parents protest at Ofsted inspections for children taught at home](#) (Times)
- [Lads' Army breaks new ground](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [School libraries: an endangered species?](#) (TES)
- [Word has it that excelling in English is now acceptable among boys](#) (TES)
- [Men-only heads' club calls it a day](#) (TES)
- [On-screen marking gets A for accuracy](#) (TES)
- [Children given police escorts from school](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Co-op is the key](#) (TES)
- ['Virtual school gate' to link parents of secondary pupils](#) (Guardian)

Head to Head

This week we spoke to Damian Groark, Head Teacher of St Benet's RC Primary School in Ouston, County Durham. Among his week, he tells us about the way the school is remembering pupil Caroline Theobald who died from an asthma attack last year.

- **Last week was** all about understanding how the school community is coming to terms with the death of one of our pupils last year. We're having a library built in her memory and as it gets closer to being finished we're all reflecting on how the loss continues to affect us as a community.
- **The two best things that happened at school last week were** firstly sending three of our staff to Prague as part of a project on castles. We've hosted teachers from Holland, Italy and the Czech Republic who stayed at Lumley Castle last term. Secondly, we've got a new pupil from a school in another area who has settled really well here, which makes me feel very proud about our school community.
- **The biggest disappointment at school last week was** seeing how hard it was to get our pupils ready for the new term after seven weeks off. I've never noticed it as much as this year, which makes me think maybe seven weeks is too long for the summer holiday.
- **The funniest thing that happened at school last week was** having my new desk delivered, which I was a bit embarrassed about as I thought it was too big for my office! I was trying to stop the teachers from seeing it by bracing myself across the corridor and then one of the teachers jammed my fingers in the door. I couldn't see through the tears whether or not she did it on purpose...
- **One thing that would have made my job easier last week was** more time to get everything done.
- **Top of my to-do list for this week is** picking the school football team in time for the new season.
- **My hero of last week was** the shared computer technician who got the monitor working again on my computer. We really couldn't do without our technicians.
- **My villain of last week was** the parent who wrote on their parent feedback questionnaire that they didn't feel that they received enough communication from the school.
- **"How do you keep this pace going for another week, never mind another year?"** When I first started as a head I probably would have asked the same question, and 8 years later I'll refer to the question above about what would have made my week easier! But the reality is I absolutely love my job, and that's all the motivation I need to keep on going.
- **My question for next week's head is...** What do you most enjoy doing outside of school?

Star pupil... *The Doctor*

An NCSL survey found this week that the person most primary school pupils would like to see as their Head Teacher is David Tennant's Doctor from the ever popular Doctor Who! The Time Lord saw off stiff competition from Harry Potter author JK Rowling, Girls Aloud and X Factor star Cheryl Cole and even US president Barrack Obama in the poll of 9 to 11-year-olds. 47% said that they made their choice because they thought their celebrity would be 'fun', while 33% said they had picked somebody they could look up to.

Could try harder... *School libraries*

Jonathan Douglas, chief executive of the National Literacy trust, has this week called for the appointment of a national tsar to champion school libraries amid worries they may be closed due to education spending cuts. He said: "School libraries are now in a very vulnerable position in the current climate of constrained public spending. There needs to be an assessment of what is going on in terms of library provision in schools and for schools."

Opportunities and Resources

BIG Reaching Communities funding

A further £20million has been allocated to this finding programme from the BIG Lottery. Schools can apply for funding of up to £500,000 to support community projects working with those most in need. More information can be found at www.biglotteryfund.org.uk.

AQA Digital Anthology

In preparation for the new GCSE exams in 2010, AQA have launched an online digital poetry anthology which provides free interactive support and resources aiming to "bring poetry to life in the classroom". The anthology can be accessed at www.anthology.aqa.org.uk.

Get you pupils booked up!

This autumn, every year 7 pupil is once again able to choose a free book from a list of 12 specially selected titles. To help your pupils choose their free book, the Book trust have provided a magazine and a DVD featuring the authors and other year 7 pupils talking about the books.

Available titles include Flood Child (Emily Diamond), Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief (Rick Riordan), Desirable (Frank Cottrell Boyce) and Underworld (Catherine MacPhail).

For more information or to sign up for the Booked Up scheme visit www.bookedup.org.uk, email enquiries@bookedupmail.org.uk or call (0845) 606 4262. The deadline for ordering books is Friday 23 October, but if you order by Wednesday 30 September you could receive a free box set of contemporary titles for your school library, while stocks last.

DCSF National Strategies initial teacher training resource

A new resource is available online to develop literacy in ITT. The DVD and web-based resource for ITT providers, trainee teachers and their mentors will help develop subject and pedagogic knowledge for teaching, assessing and supporting progress in children's learning in key aspects of literacy.

The resource includes case studies, professional development activity and materials and identifies ways in which trainee teachers can have a significant impact on children's learning when ITT providers work in partnership with schools and local authorities.

The materials can be accessed online at www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/ad8/dlitt, while copies can be made available for order by calling (0845) 6022260 and quoting the reference 00035-2009DVD-EN.

Britain Sasakawa Foundation Grants

Small grants of up to £1,500 are available to develop UK – Japan relations in schools. A wide range of activities are supported including the arts and culture, science, technology and the environment, humanities and social issues, language, medicine and sport. There are three deadlines throughout the year: 15 December, 31 March and 31 August. For more information visit www.gbsf.org.uk.

Futurelab Learning with Games call for ideas

This is a fantastic opportunity for members of your school with an innovative idea about learning with games and technology. Individual teachers and pupils or schools can apply for funding to see their idea become a reality. The deadline for ideas is 8 October, and for more information on how to apply visit www.futurelab.org.uk/get-involved/submit-an-idea.

And finally...

The Independent's education editor Richard Garner looked this week at a growing army of seventysomethings who are going back to school to allow them to carry on working. He wrote a fascinating column focusing on 76-year-old Maria Tolly who recently won an award from the National Institute of Adult and Continuing Learning for retraining as a computer software developer. Click [here](#) to read her story in full.

Have a great week!