



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

16th September 2019

Dear Mr. Stevens,

I am writing to you regarding the concerning use of misleading statistics by the National Education Union (NEU), as part of their campaign on school funding.

On their website, the NEU makes two claims that seem, at best, misleading, and at worst, downright untrue. First, they claim 'Not every school will see a real terms rise' with regards to education funding.¹ I believe this to be extremely misleading, as the Conservative Government is investing more than £14 billion in primary and secondary education between now and 2022-23, so that 'per-pupil funding for all schools can rise at least in line with inflation'.² This money will go to local authorities to distribute and ministers have made clear to local leaders that they expect the funding to be used to increase school budgets. This reality is not reflected in any way in the NEU's claim.

Second, the NEU state 'The Government has said they are delivering a minimum of £5,000 per secondary pupil ... Many schools will receive less than this.'³ This claim by the NEU is simply not true. Under the Government's plans, every secondary school is guaranteed a minimum of £5,000 per pupil next year. I am unable to determine on what information the NEU are basing their claim.

I am sure you will agree that, in discussing policy, it is important that campaigning organisations are truthful in their representation of the Government's position. While ministers should always be willing to engage with those groups looking to make a difference within a particular area, it is vital that no misleading or untruthful information is presented to the public as fact. This only serves to undermine the quality of the debate and fails to recognise when good progress is being made. As such, I hope you will be investigating this misuse of statistics so that it can be corrected urgently, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ranil Jayawardena', written in a cursive style.

RANIL JAYAWARDENA

¹ NEU, Government school funding announcement, accessed 14 September 2019, bit.ly/2kqjINP

² Department for Education, Press Release, 30 August 2019, bit.ly/2jTw5NV

³ NEU, Government school funding announcement, accessed 14 September 2019, bit.ly/2kqjINP

Mr. Mervyn Stevens
UK Statistics Authority