

School news

A round up of the latest news about schools.



1 SELECTIVE EDUCATION

GMB opposes selective education on the basis of ability and religion.

There continues to be plenty of comment about selection, following the government's announcements concerning **Grammar schools**. Labour's Lisa Nandy said 'the idea that in 2016 in Britain that any child is better off by being segregated and branded a failure at the age of 11 seems to me to be a particularly backwards looking approach'; whilst Social Mobility campaigner Alan Milburn says they will fail to boost classroom standards –and would wreck May's mission to build a Britain that works for everyone. In a hard-hitting report, he predicts a return to selection will only create more divisions in society.

Three-quarters of the public and most religious people are opposed to religious selection in school. The TES is reporting that even those who identify with a particular religion oppose school selection by faith, a survey reveals. The proposal is to allow faith schools to select entirely on the basis of religion.

GMB supports the views of Chair person of the Accord Coalition for Inclusive Education, Rabbi Jonathan Romain, who said: "Schools are the state-funded institutions that should be doing most to prepare people for life in a diverse society, not segregating and discriminating against children on the grounds of faith."

Sir Michael Wilshaw, head of Ofsted, said an expansion of grammar schools planned by Theresa May would stall progress. Wilshaw has spoken out several times against new grammars since the policy was announced by the prime minister.

2 IT'S HARD NOT TO SAY 'WE TOLD YOU SO'

GMB is unsurprised that England's academy trusts run up debts of £25m

The [BBC](#) reported new figures that show debts run up by 113 academy trusts in England amount to almost £25m.

The numbers raise "serious concerns about the accountability" of the system, said Meg Hillier, chairwoman of the Commons Public Accounts Committee.

Neil Carmichael MP said “There is growing concern around value for public money in the academy sector, from trustees earning more than the prime minister to multi-million pound contracts being awarded to related parties.”

3 ACADEMY LEADERSHIP PAY

GMB members are outraged after it was revealed the head of a south London primary school federation earned £370,000 last year.

Sir Craig Tunstall, head of the Gipsy Hill Federation, was reportedly paid £330,000 plus £44,000 in pension contributions by Lambeth council last year,

and, to add insult to injury, this at a time when the federation are planning to reduce maternity pay for lower paid female support staff.

4 GOVERNMENT FORMALLY DROPS ACADEMIES LEGISLATION

The government has decided to drop a bill to convert schools to academies.

The Education Bill was based on a white paper which initially suggested all schools in England would be compelled to become academies.

The element of compulsion was dropped by the government after protests from many councils, including the mainly Conservative members of the County Council Network, who were opposed to forcing high-performing schools in their areas to convert.

GMB were committed to putting pressure on the government, alongside all of the education trade unions, and welcomes this decision, but remains concerned that schools will come under further pressure to convert.

5 NUT/ATL MERGER

The TES is reporting that a new ‘super union’ for teachers and lecturers is one step closer after the NUT and ATL voted to ballot members over merger.

If it goes ahead, the new union, which would be called the National Education Union, would launch in September next year.

The Three recognised trade unions for school support staff remain GMB, Unison and Unite. This will not change and the new union, if the merger goes ahead, will only be recognised for teaching staff.

5 BRINGING THE SCHOOL IN TO DISREPUTE?

GMB has for a long time warned members of the unfairly high expectations placed on them in terms of behaviour when they are not at work, which is hardly matched by the recognition for their role and the pay they receive.

A teacher who verbally abused bouncers was suspended by her primary school while it investigated her 'drunken behaviour.'

Footage of the teacher yelling at door staff went viral when it was shared online in August last year. The year two teacher was suspended when a witness filmed her outside the bar and the clip was brought to the school's attention after parents recognised her.

Working in a world where social media is prevalent, members need to be aware that they could be 'under surveillance' at any time, which could have an impact on you and your job.

6 PUPIL STABBINGS CAN HAPPEN IN ANY SCHOOL, NOT JUST THOSE IN 'TROUBLED' AREAS, SAYS INVESTIGATOR

GMB continues its 'Stop the violence campaign' as a man is charged with the stabbing of a 16-year-old.

A report on the incident stated: 'however middle-class your area, such an incident could happen among your pupils too. It is you in the schools who think this has nothing to do with you, that need to listen.'

GMB urges all school support staff to complete our on line survey at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/gmbhandsoff>

7 'TEACHING ASSISTANTS PROVIDE ESSENTIAL INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION TO PUPILS WHO MIGHT OTHERWISE FEEL UNHEARD AND UNSAFE'

The valuable work of TAs often goes unrecognised but they are making a real difference to the lives of children in difficult times, writes the former DfE mental health champion who said 'During my nine months as the government's mental health champion, I consulted with several experts to produce a report on the state of mental wellbeing in schools.'

GMB is concerned that knee jerk reaction by heads to government cuts will result in front line job losses of our members, and a real and immediate detriment to these pupils who rely on this support and attention.

8 CRASHES ON THE SCHOOL RUN ARE ON THE INCREASE

The Nottingham Post is reporting that accidents on the school run are on the up in the longer term locally, with the number in 2015 being 4.7% higher than the average yearly figure between 2010 and 2014.

Across the whole of Britain, 3,452 people crashed on the school run in 2015, down by four per cent when compared to the 3,607 in 2014. Of this number in 2015, 297 crashes resulted in serious injury while eight were fatal compared with 399 serious injuries and 10 fatal injuries in 2014. Drivers can get distracted by children when they are on the school run.

GMB calls on the government to protect the jobs of our hard working 'Lollipop' men and women, some of whom have repeatedly had their jobs, and therefore pupil safety, put at risk over the past few years.

GMB ORGANISES IN SCHOOLS UP AND DOWN THE COUNTRY, ACROSS ALL SUPPORT STAFF ROLES AND GRADES WITHIN OUR SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES.

For a meeting in your school to discuss all or any of these issues, and any other issues which are important to you, please contact:

Insert contact details here email on: @gmb.org.uk

We are **your** union, in **your** school, there for you when you need us, existing to protect, support and help you, and to promote the interests of our members, their families and the wider community.

If you are not in the union, why not join us today.

WWW.GMB.ORG.UK/JOIN