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**Rt Hon Alan Johnson MP**

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*Dear Vanni*

**NATIONAL COLLEGE FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP (NCSL) PRIORITIES:  
2007-08**

I am writing about my priorities and associated funding for the NCSL in 2007-08.

I am grateful for the progress that the College made in 2006-07; both for the way in which you have revitalised the Governing Council and for the impact that Steve Munby has had, both in completing a major restructuring of the senior leadership of NCSL, and in making the College more outward looking, actively seeking the views of school leaders on what they expect from the College, and focusing it on delivering its key priorities.

We all agree that an adequate supply of high quality, well-trained leaders in our schools is key to their success in the next ten years.

As well as retaining existing heads, we need to ensure that we are encouraging the best of our middle leaders to aspire to headship, and that they receive the best possible support and development in doing so. We recognise that the demographic profile of school leaders gives us a particular challenge from 2009 onwards; and that leaders will need a wider range of skills to deal with the evolving demands our society is placing on schools, both in raising standards and in the need to work seamlessly with partners throughout children's services and the wider community.

This work is well supported by the PwC study into school leadership which emphasises the changing landscape, where different models of effective school leadership are emerging that challenge the sustainability of a "traditional" school model and the need for increasing diversity in the way schools organise their leadership teams. This could mean, for example,

headteachers leading across more than one institution, or bringing people with expertise in particular areas into leadership teams, or providing shared services for smaller schools, so that more schools have access to high level HR and financial skills. It is also essential that school leaders have the skills to lead their schools strategically in working well with partners within their local communities. All of these issues are central to the NCSL's work to develop leaders to work effectively in new environments and to ensure that NPQH, our flagship qualification, continues to equip emerging leaders to lead the schools of tomorrow, as well as today.

Remodelling is also an important part of schools making year-on-year improvements in their deployment and management of resources and financial efficiency. Staff costs are a major part of a school's finances and I would ask the College to reflect on ways it can strengthen its support to schools to help them make the very best of the improved finances we have put at their disposal.

## **PRIORITIES**

In short, the key priorities for the College's work in 2007-08 should be: succession planning, redesign of NPQH, and the development of new models of leadership. The College has to ensure the system has both the volume and quality of school leaders it needs to implement the drive on standards and wellbeing. The College's success in 2007-08 will be largely judged by its performance on these issues.

There are, in addition, other important strands of work I would like to see pursued by the College. These are described in the Annex to this letter.

## **WORKING WITH THE DfES**

The relationship between NCSL and the DfES is critical to the College's success. It needs to be characterised, in both directions, by openness, clarity, consistency, challenge, and a shared sense of purpose. The DfES is responsible for setting the strategic framework for the operation of the College, but we rely on it as our leading source of policy advice and support on all matters concerned with school leadership capacity and development. I look to the College to share its knowledge of the system with the Department, to provide it with timely and accurate intelligence about key issues that impact on school leadership and options for addressing them, reporting progress and early warning of potential shortfalls and other issues.

## **WORKING WITH PARTNERS**

The College will also need to take account of the outcomes of the Capability Review of my Department that was published last year. I know that the College will continue to work closely with officials to ensure we respond to the many challenges the Review contained. It will be particularly important for us to work in partnership to ensure everyone is absolutely clear on the role we all



play in driving delivery. For that reason we have created the DfES Group as a forum for consultation with the Chairs and Chief Executives of our NDPBs and I know that you and Steve Munby are playing an active part in that. We need to ensure that effective performance management of delivery is made central to our work and that of our NDPBs, and that there is a clear focus on rigorous risk assessment, value for money and proactive contract management.

The Capability Review focused not only on the relationship between the Department and its NDPBs, but also on the importance of NDPBs themselves working effectively in partnership. NCSL and TDA between them are responsible for the full range of school workforce professional development from support staff through to the senior leadership team. A coherent approach on the part of the two organisations, particularly when addressing the challenges of the modernisation agenda will be essential to provide the much needed clarity the system requires. I look to the NCSL and the TDA jointly to pilot a School Leaders' Service offering quality advice to school leadership teams on a range of issues.

In addition to this, the College needs to continue to develop and maintain close engagement and excellent relations with a range of stakeholders, most especially of course with school leaders, but also with school governor organisations such as NGA and NCOGs, providers, higher education institutions, local authorities, and a wide range of national bodies not only TDA, but also SSAT, the National Strategies, GTC, Becta, CEL and agencies concerned with services for children, young people and families. The College should consider ways in which effective strategic alliances might be formed with other parties on specific issues.

I will look to the College to work effectively with WAMG both in promoting to school leaders the role that they have in championing the on-going reform, and in remodelling of the school workforce. I will also look to the College to work with WAMG on the extensive programme of work about new models of, and approaches to, school leadership that the Department, within the Social Partnership, will be taking forward in the coming year. This will include, but go beyond, work to improve the work-life balance of school leaders.

It is important that NCSL keeps abreast of other workforce developments across the wider children's workforce. For example, The Children's Workforce Network (CWN) is taking forward work on leadership and management. NCSL may wish to consider joining the CWN National Reference Group for stakeholders in the children's workforce. An invitation to join the Reference Group will be sent to the College shortly and I very much hope that it will take up the offer.

## **FUNDING**

The indicative funding for grant-in-aid to the College in 2007-08 is **£65 million**. Where additional funding is being made available for specific areas of work, these are identified separately in the Annex to this letter. Details of the notional breakdown of total funding will be set out in a separate letter from my

officials later this month. I also look to the College to improve its financial planning and profiling.

### **EFFICIENCY SAVINGS**

The College continues to have a vital role to play in helping the Department meet the public commitment to reduce administrative costs in NDPBs and Ofsted by at least 15% in real terms by 2007-08, measured against 2004-05 baselines. Officials will discuss with the College the scope for reviewing the agreed savings that were indicated in last year's remit letter as a result of its reducing grant-in-aid and any revisions will be included in the separate letter from officials about the College's notional breakdown of total funding that will issue in due course.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Department or the College can propose amendments to this remit letter in-year provided that both organisations are in agreement. The College should seek the prior agreement of the NDPB Sponsor Unit in the Department's School Resources Group before taking on any significant new work during the year.

I look to the College to agree with me the numerical targets for the balanced scorecard to be included in its 2007-08 Corporate Plan. I look forward to agreeing the Corporate Plan later this month and subsequently to hearing about the College's further progress on its activities.

*Yours sincerely*  
*Alan Johnson*

**Alan Johnson**



## **WORK STRANDS**

Each of the tasks that I want the College to engage with in 2007-08 are grouped under four priority areas in this annex: Identifying and Developing Tomorrow's Leaders; Developing New Models of Leadership; Providing Professional Development and Challenge for School Leaders; and areas of work that relate to the wider landscape. I know that you and Steve Munby have been in discussion with Jim Knight, and with officials about some of these. Where not set out below, details of the appropriate targets and milestones in respect of individual activities will need to be agreed with the Department to the dates indicated below.

In all areas, I look to the College to ensure that the leadership required to deliver ECM and workforce development is developed through all College current and future programmes. Furthermore, I look to the College to equip current and future school leaders with the confidence to lead both the ECM and Standards agenda in order that they are seen as complementary, and not competing, demands on their time. The College needs to equip these leaders to be able to work in an increasingly complex, accountable, cross sector and extended environment by providing them with support at local, national and regional level, and to be able to access resources and examples of good practice.

### **Identifying and Developing Tomorrow's Leaders**

#### **Succession Planning**

You have already provided me with advice on how the issue of succession planning might be addressed and, on the basis of this, I agreed to NCSL carrying out work in a number of pilot areas to develop local strategies to meet this challenge. You have now provided further advice in the light of interim findings coming out of this pilot work. I look to NCSL to continue to work closely with my officials as it continues this work in 2007-08. I know that you have agreed a package of measures with them and I am prepared to agree to provide the College with an additional **£10 million**, over and above core grant-in-aid to enable this work to be carried out, subject to further exploration with the Department as the project develops. I look to the College to make a case for funding for the incentives it is developing which we will consider at mid-year review, taking into account value for money and affordability.

I know that my officials are in discussion with the College about the future arrangements for the Trainee Headteachers Scheme from September 2007. The funding for the Scheme will be determined once those discussions have been concluded and the arrangements for the 2007/08 academic year agreed.

### Future Leaders

I am pleased that early indications from this pilot programme are encouraging, that the current intake has been well received by schools, and that it is expected the majority will find posts by September next year. It is encouraging that the business community has responded positively to this initiative, as reflected by its sponsorship, which indicates that the programme should be expanded in 2007-08. I am also persuaded by the argument that the acuteness of the succession planning challenge in London warrants an increase to the programme. I therefore look to the College to continue its work on this programme with SSAT and ARK, and to increase the number of candidates in Cohort 2 from 20 to 40.

### Fast Track

The College took over operational running of the Fast Track programme in September 2006 and I look to it to continue developing the programme so that an increasing number of teachers with leadership potential reach senior leadership positions. I look to the College to provide advice on development of the programme by the end of May 2007. Funding for Fast Track in 2007-08, which will be ringfenced, is **£12.5 million**.

### Developing New Models of Leadership

#### Work Arising from Recommendations of PwC Study into School Leadership

I am pleased with the strong engagement and support that the College provided both to my officials and the PwC study team throughout the course of this very important project. I am also grateful that the College's Think Tank on London Leadership provided an excellent platform for Jim Knight to launch the report on 18 January 2007.

I expect the College to take account of those conclusions and recommendations of the report that relate to NCSL's strategic initiatives and core priorities. My officials will discuss with the College any new work that may arise from the recommendations of the PwC study not covered by this letter. I look to the College to agree proposals for further work with the Department by the end of April.

### National Leaders of Education

I congratulate the College on the work it has done in 2006-07 in making progress on the development and accreditation of the first group of National Leaders of Education. The primary focus of the first group of National Leaders of Education (NLEs) and their National Support Schools is to support schools in Special Measures or in challenging circumstances. I welcome the role NLEs will play to raise standards and close the attainment gap, and produce sustainable solutions. I look to the College to provide advice by April 2007 on how NLEs might be deployed in other priorities and challenges and in the development of system leadership in its widest sense.



### Primary Leadership

I look to the College to convene a Primary Leadership Group, in partnership with the Director of the National Primary Strategy and DfES officials to consider key issues facing primary heads and how they are planning to address them in their core leadership programmes and strategic initiatives in order to support the drive for higher standards in primary schools and progress for all pupils. I would like the College to provide me with advice by July 2007 on how the issues raised might be addressed. It should also give particular focus on how primary leaders can best be developed and supported to work in schools or groups of schools with different models of leadership and governance introduced in order to raise standards further or turn around problems of failure.

### Personalised Learning

I would also welcome the College offering advice by May 2007 on how the implications of the Gilbert Review on Personalised Learning can be reflected in NCSL's programmes and initiatives. I look to the College to work in collaboration with QCA, Becta and other key stakeholders including TDA and Ofsted in bringing forward proposals for the development of the leadership of personalised learning.

## **Providing Professional Development and Challenge for School Leaders**

### National Professional Qualification for Headship

I look to the College to continue the work it has begun on the redesign of NPQH, taking into account the feedback it has received from, for example, its recent series of regional conferences. The revised NPQH can help develop school leaders' skills in such critical areas as financial management and management and development of human resources. The programme should also aim to provide more personalisation for candidates and, as part of that process, the College should consider how the possibilities for links with accreditation to other courses (eg MBA) might be developed.

I look to the College to maintain the good reputation of this flagship programme and to keep my officials in close touch with the proposals for its redesign, so that Ministers can take decisions about its future.

The College should aim to have up to 2,800 candidates on the NPQH programme in 2007-08. This total is made up of 1,800 new recruits and 850 continuing from 2006-07 on the existing NPQH, and up to 150 on the pilot of the new-style NPQH from March 2008. The details of the proposed pilot must be agreed with Ministers when the College comes back with its advice on the redesign of NPQH in April 2007.

### National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership

The College will continue to deliver and develop this key programme for

leaders of Sure Start Children's Centres. In 2007-08 we expect the programme to be shaped by the evaluation of its national roll-out in 2005-06. The College will also continue its work, drawing on relevant partners as appropriate, to redesign the programme, taking into account the work to redesign NPQH, and the National Standards for Leaders of Children's Centres which was published in February 2007.

In 2007-08, based on performance in 2006-07, the College should be aiming to deliver approximately 400 places for the programme, within indicative grant funding of **£5.5 million**. Negotiations on the specific details of the programme and the funding will take place between the College and the DfES. Funding for this programme will continue to be ring-fenced.

#### School Improvement - SIPS

We look to the College to continue to carry out the work specified in its contract for operating the assessments of applicants to become accredited school improvement partners (SIPs). The College carries out this work under contract to Capita Strategic Children's Services, which is the DfES's contractor for the National Strategies for Primary and Secondary Education. The main accreditation task is for primary SIPs; the SIP programme needs 2600 people accredited to be primary SIPs prior to the completion of the roll-out of the SIP function in April 2008. By December 2007, SIPs will be needed for all special schools - in the region of 350 SIPs. And there will be further assessment needed for secondary SIP accreditation, to add to the pool of secondary SIPs.

#### Academies – Complex Schools

I want the College to continue to develop provision for leaders who work in academies where they face a range of challenges. In particular, and in partnership with SSAT, I look to the College to continue to develop provision for Principals Designate and Principals in their first year of the opening of the academy. As the number of academies continues to increase we need to ensure there are sufficient highly effective people to lead them. The College should be aiming to deliver provision for up to at least 50 Principals Designate and serving Principals. Ring-fenced funding to support this activity will be **£350,000** in 2007-08.

#### Safer Recruitment

I am pleased that a significant number of heads and governors have now accessed the Safer Recruitment online training, which plays an important part in the measures being taken to safeguard children. However, the momentum needs to be maintained. I look to the College to work with the Department and other key stakeholders to maximise the numbers taking part in the training.



### Strategic Leadership with ICT

The effective use of digital technologies (ICT) is a major driver for school improvement and I want to see this become a reality in schools. The Department will look to the College to build on the success of the Strategic Leadership with ICT (SLICT) programme by developing a coherent package of leadership development that will further support delivery of the Department's e-Strategy: *Harnessing Technology: Transforming learning and children's services*. In particular I would like the College, working in partnership with Becta and others, to focus on measures that will ensure institutions (and the system as a whole) develop and embed their use of technology. This should support transformation and help realise the benefits to institutions of applying digital technologies across learning, teaching and management delivery. I expect the College to deliver opportunities for around 1,500 leaders with a focus on embedding technology into head teachers' strategic planning, using the Becta Self-Review Framework as a starting point to support institutional improvement and planning. Funding to the College, which will be ring-fenced, will be **£1.5 million** in 2007-08.

The importance of ICT goes wider than any single programme and I expect NCSL to work closely with Becta to ensure that the planning and delivery of leadership programmes fully reflects the role of digital technologies in modernisation and reform.

### London Challenge

The College will continue to offer training and development opportunities in London as part of national initiatives. In addition to that work, the Department will continue to fund the College to work with London Challenge to manage the London Leadership Strategy offering training, development and support that is tailored to the specific needs of leaders and potential leaders in London. Funding for this work in 2007-08, which will be ringfenced, will be **£4.1 million**.

### Aiming High: Black Pupils Achievement Programme

I look to the College to continue its bespoke training programme to support senior school managers and local authority representatives involved in the "Aiming High: Black Pupils Achievement" programme. Details of key milestones are to be agreed between the College and my officials. Funding to the College for this work in 2007-08, which will be ring-fenced, will be **£56,838**.

### Wider Landscape

#### Building Schools for the Future (BSF)

With Schools Capital as the client, the College will deliver a leadership programme which will provide training for Local Authorities and schools. Working at a corporate level in Authorities and with school leaders,

the aim of the project is to build skills which will enable BSF to achieve educational transformation. It will include work on educational vision and change management and deal with complex procurements that fully reflect the role of ICT. The programme will continue to deliver training for schools to include projects in BSF Waves 4 to 6, in advance of completion of the initial pilot. The College will work with the other BSF delivery partners, such as 4Ps, PfS and Becta to ensure joined up working, providing the relevant support and advice to BSF Authorities.

In addition it will test the usefulness of the training for other major programmes by extending the pilot to the 23 pathfinders as part of the primary capital programme and to one-off, new-build, secondary projects in the One School Pathfinder programme. Funding to the College for this work in 2007-08 will be: **£1.9 million** for the Building Schools for the Future Waves 4 to 6 pilot extension; and **£775,000** for the primary and one-off projects pilot extension. Funding will be ringfenced for this purpose.

#### Sustainable Development

I understand that the College is currently drafting a Sustainable Development Action Plan as recommended by "Learning for the Future", the DfES Sustainable Development Action Plan, in March 2006. I welcome this and urge the College to use this opportunity to explore how its own operations and work with school leaders – not least as it revises NPQH – can support the Department's ambition to embed sustainable development thinking and practices in all areas of the education system.

#### Support for implementation of the 14-19 agenda

We are committed to developing a system of 14-19 education matching the best anywhere; a system where all young people have opportunities to learn in ways which motivate and engage them and through hard work to qualify themselves for success in life. I would like NCSL to continue working on their joint project with Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) to prepare leaders and managers for the 14-19 reforms. The support for leaders and managers should be as agreed between my officials and the College, and should link to existing work where appropriate. The support provided must be scalable depending on the results of the Diploma Gateway. Once we have more clarity about the numbers needing development, we will have further more detailed discussions about the capacity of the support. We will provide ring-fenced funding to the College of **£1,030,400** in 2007-08.

As a key part of the 14-19 reforms is about collaboration, in addition to their work on their project with CEL, NCSL must continue to collaborate with all of the 14-19 workforce partners (QIA, SSAT, SNS, TDA, LLUK and NNA), the Diploma Development Partnerships and awarding bodies to ensure that the overall 14-19 workforce support package is coherent and meets the requirements of the Diplomas and Functional Skills.



### Review of KS3

To support the secondary curriculum review implementation, NCSL will work with the Department and other key delivery partners. NCSL will help to develop and test training materials and requirements, and to use their annual conferences and Leadership Network Regional workshops to support the delivery of training and communication messages particularly to school heads and leadership teams. Funding to the College for this work in 2007-08, which will be ring-fenced, will be **£244,550**.