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More than 7 in 10 teachers against making pay rises based on performance: poll

There is widespread opposition amongst teachers to the latest government proposals to reform teacher pay. More than seven in ten (74%) teachers in England and Wales are against changing teachers' pay structure to make salary rises based on performance, rather than the current system of annual pay rises based on years of service, according to YouGov's latest Teacher Track survey.

The School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) recommended in December that headteachers be given more freedom on deciding teacher pay. Education Secretary Michael Gove recently announced he agreed with the recommendations, and that the move to performance-related pay for teachers would come into effect from September.

However, the poll also found a softening of opposition amongst the headteachers and deputy heads surveyed. The data shows that 42% of heads and deputy heads support the recommendation that teacher pay be based on teacher performance and assessed through annual appraisals, rather than annual pay rises based on years of service. Although still a majority (55%) of heads and deputy heads oppose this change.

The nationally representative poll of 748 primary and secondary teachers in England and Wales found that teachers are overwhelmingly opposed to every aspect of the new pay regime, except for the decision to retain higher pay bands for teachers in London and the surrounding area.

- 77% oppose the decision to abolish all pay increases based on length of service, preventing teachers automatically gaining year-on-year rises
- 74% oppose linking all pay progression to performance based on annual appraisals by line managers
- 79% are against abolishing statutory pay scales to give headteachers greater freedom to control salaries
- 69% support retaining higher pay bands for London and the surrounding area

Meanwhile, an earlier YouGov poll conducted for the Sunday Times found that the public is divided on teachers' pay, with a plurality (48%) in favour of the old system where salary increases are based on experience and duties, while 43% support the change to performance-related pay, and 9% say they don't know.

Commenting on the Teacher Track findings, YouGov Associate Director Ian Neale said: "Michael Gove is clearly very determined to push through his reform agenda, even if it attracts the ire of teachers. Our earlier Teacher Track survey found that less than one in four teachers are in favour of changes to the exam system, and this latest poll shows there is even stronger opposition to making pay rises based on performance. However, the difference in the strength of opposition between heads, deputy heads and classroom teachers adds an interesting dynamic to how schools will implement this policy on the frontline. The profession and the government will of course be keen to monitor if the current

opposition amongst teachers persists, or if they become more accepting of the changes over time.”

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Notes to editors:

Total sample size was 796 teaching professionals in the UK. The sample covers both primary and secondary school teachers and job roles from Head Teacher down to classroom teacher. Fieldwork was carried out from December 6th-12th 2012. The survey was carried out online. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc.

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