

## SESLIP AD Education Network Update: November 17<sup>th</sup> 2023

### In Today's Update:

- DfE: Consultation about reference materials in this summer's GCSEs, Good practice guidance about reserves for MATs, evaluation of capital advisers programme for MATs, KS5 qualifications data, Ofsted blogs on schools absence and safeguarding in school inspection.
- National reports: School staff wellbeing across England - paints a bleak picture; young people and violence - national report.
- News: Reshuffle: schools minister & profile of new cabinet, P8 & type of approach to education, Readers' Theatre - evidenced approach to reading, FE colleges stretched by numbers doing GCSE resits, headteacher account of her approach to leadership of change, Education Committee hears few leaders rate the DfE's workload reduction toolkit, School Cuts campaign is relaunched.

### **1. DfE:**

- Two week consultation about a continuation of permission for students sitting GCSEs in maths, physics and combined science in 2024 to have access to formulae and equation reference sheets.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-changes-to-the-assessment-of-mathematics-physics-and-combined-science-gcses-in-2024/proposed-changes-to-the-assessment-of-mathematics-physics-and-combined-science-gcses-in-2024>
- A good practice guide for MATs and trustees focused on reserves. It sets out that MATs with reserves of more than a fifth of income will have to report to DfE about how they are ensuring all pupils' needs are being met. There is no expectation that excessive reserves will be clawed back. The ESFA will also make contact if reserves fall below 5% of income.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-trust-financial-management-good-practice-guides/academy-trust-reserves>
- MAT capital advisers pilot programme evaluation. 4 out of 5 trusts held insufficient information about the condition of their school buildings nor did most have estates strategies. There was positive feedback from participating MATs with 12 of them reporting significant savings. The programme is expected to expand to engage a further 70 MATs.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/capital-advisers-programme-pilot-evaluation>
- A-level and other 16 - 18 qualifications data for 2022-23. Positive evidence that the disadvantage gap for A-levels is largely back up to pre-pandemic levels. However, the gap for those taking technical and applied qualifications is wider than in 2019. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/a-level-and-other-16-to-18-results/2022-23>
- Ofsted publishes a blog on school attendance, highlighting its importance. It also acknowledges that it will judge schools favourably that are, in its view, doing all they can to reduce absences even if their absence levels are quite high. <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2023/11/16/improving-school-attendance/> And another recent one about safeguarding: <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2023/11/09/how-we-inspect-safeguarding-in-schools/>

### **2. Reports:**

- Report based on an annual panel survey of wellbeing across staff roles in school, the Wellbeing Index reports that wellbeing is lower than at any point over the previous seven years and levels of staff stress are higher than reported before. This includes 9 out of 10 leaders reporting they experience high levels of stress. The workplace culture for most staff is not conducive to wellbeing, with 1 in 6 feeling isolated at work. [https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/media/0h4jd5pt/twix\\_2023.pdf](https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/media/0h4jd5pt/twix_2023.pdf)
- Report based on its panel survey of 13 to 17 year olds, YEF's 2023 violence and vulnerability report. 1 in 6 young people had been a victim of violence and nearly half had witnessed violence in the past

year. School is generally rated as one of the safer spaces by young people, below home and friends / relatives houses, whilst the survey reminds us that those who perpetrate violence are often victims too (48%). Experience of violence varies, it is significantly higher for those of minority ethnic background whilst, regionally, the South-east has the lowest levels and London the highest.

<https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/reports/children-violence-and-vulnerability-2023/summary/>

### **3. News:**

- Reshuffle: Damian Hinds, former Secretary of State for Education, is confirmed as Schools Minister in replacement of Nick Gibb, who plans to step down as an MP at the next general election. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/damian-hinds-returns-to-dfe-as-minister-of-state/> . Analysis of the education background of the Cabinet, following the reshuffle. An increase to 63% having been educated at independent school and 53% studied at Oxbridge. <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/sutton-trust-cabinet-analysis-2023/>
- Article revisiting the debate about so called traditional and progressive schooling and the extent these approaches perform well in terms of the Progress 8 measure of secondary schools. Points are made that any one measure is likely to over-simplify, with P8 biased towards schools with higher proportions of students who are EAL. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/has-nick-gibb-won-the-education-battle/>
- Blog post making the case for using Readers' Theatre's approach to developing the reading fluency of pupils, especially in the primary classroom. Article includes links to a research review and the EEF's recommendation statement. <https://www.theconfidentteacher.com/2023/10/fostering-fluency-with-readers-theatre/>
- FE colleges having to hire additional staff and increase class sizes due to increasing numbers of students needing to resit maths and English GCSEs. Some are renting external halls for the exams themselves. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-67192631>
- Insightful account from a headteacher about the approaches she took to leadership and improvement when she join a secondary that was RI. Shared vision and values were very much her starting point. <https://www.tes.com/magazine/leadership/tips-techniques/requires-improvement-school-ofsted-how-to-improve>
- The Education Select Committee's enquiry into teacher recruitment and retention hears that fewer than 1 in 10 leaders found the DfE's workload reduction toolkit useful. Although nearly half of teachers express interest in more flexible working or reduced hours, this is difficult to achieve when there is a recruitment crisis. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/teachers-home-working-masks-true-workload-challenge/>
- The School Cuts campaign has been relaunched by teaching unions and ParentKind as part of putting pressure on the Chancellor to increase the budget allocation for school in 2024-25. There is concern that schools will have to make cuts or continue to struggle to retain teachers unless additional funding is provided. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/school-cuts-relaunch-puts-unions-on-collision-course-with-dfe-again/>