

PRESS RELEASE

FROM: Fiona Bruce MP for Congleton Constituency

DATE: 3rd December 2010



Fiona Bruce MP urges Minister to ‘think again’ on sports funding for Alsager area schools.

Fiona Bruce MP met with the Rt. Hon. Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Education, this week, in Parliament, to press for a review by the Government of their plans to withdraw funding for the School Sports Partnerships.

Fiona Bruce said:

‘I sought the meeting to draw the Minister’s attention to the wide range of excellent work being done by the Sandbach School Sport Partnership. I pointed out how the SSSP encourages and supports young people to enjoy a wide range of sporting activities right across my constituency including in Congleton, Middlewich, Alsager and Sandbach. School Sports Co-ordinators from the SSSP lead PE classes (where a school has no specialist PE teacher), run after-school clubs and competitive sports events. I drew the Minister’s attention to SSSP’s very serious concerns that the proposed funding changes would have a detrimental effect on a huge number of pupils currently participating in school sports.

*The Secretary of State told me that the Government is ‘**aware of the very good work being done by many SSPs and wants to retain what is good**’.*

Fiona Bruce continued:

‘I also pointed out that Sandbach High School is a Specialist Sports College and drew the Minister’s attention to the statement by John Leigh, Headmaster of Sandbach High School, that at present ‘the school could not plan ahead when we want to arrange a vibrant programme of sporting activities’ due to uncertainty about future funding of the SSSP.

I can confirm that Mr Gove listened intently to my representations on behalf of pupils and teachers in the Congleton Constituency, and more than that, said that Mr Leigh’s

*point was **'well made – he makes a very good case'**. The Minister continued that he is **'aware of the importance of providing clarity at an early date, and will be doing so'**.*

Fiona Bruce obtained an assurance that the Government is now looking again at this issue to ensure that there will be continuing funding to support sports in schools.

Fiona Bruce said:

'I attended the entire debate in the House of Commons this week on Schools Sports Partnerships where many MPs raised up their concerns on this issue and then personally sought the meeting with the Minister because I wanted to be absolutely sure that he knows of the high quality of sports teaching being done by the Sandbach School Sport Partnership and Sandbach High School as a Specialist Sports College and the very real concerns within my constituency about these proposals'.

*'I asked the Government to **'think again'** about funding for SSPs and understand that a further announcement following this week's debate and representations will be made shortly'.*

ENDS