

0924 271347

23 Hall Cliffe Grove  
Horbury  
WAKEFIELD

23 September 1985

Rt Hon Mrs Margaret Thatcher MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

Dear Prime Minister

In the temporary absence of the Chairman of the Management Panel of the Burnham Primary & Secondary Committee, I am writing on her behalf (as well as on mine, as Vice-Chairman) to ask if you would agree to meet some leading representatives of the employers to discuss the problems raised by the dispute with the teachers and the urgency of securing a solution.

The Management Panel unanimously resolved to offer the teachers a package which took full advantage of the additional resources which the Secretary of State for Education and Science indicated that the Government would approve if there were sufficient progress towards a structure of reforms in teachers' salaries and other conditions of service. Sir Keith Joseph has of course made it perfectly clear that, for new resources in 1986/87, there is a deadline imposed by the rate support grant settlement. The deadline which he has given is 11 October. The Chairman and Leader of the Panel has already asked him for additional financial support this year, flexibility over the 11 October deadline, greater long-term resources and sufficient funding to produce a solution to the problem of midday supervision in schools. He was not able to offer hope of a positive response, though I understand that officials are looking into some slight movement of the RSG deadline.

The teachers' sense of injustice and their perception that the resources are simply not available to produce a level of remuneration which fits the full professional job which Management requires of them have exacerbated industrial action in schools up and down the country, with more than a threat to working relationships, the quality of education and the good conduct of pupils, especially at midday. In this exceptionally difficult situation, local education authorities feel that they are being backed up against a wall of the Government's own construction. As employers, we find our room for manoeuvre almost totally constrained, and yet the LEAs have the clearest of all pictures of the detriment to young people, their parents, manual workers in schools and the teachers themselves.

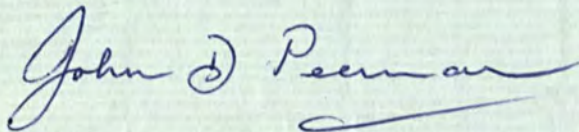
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Councillor Mrs Nicky Harrison CBE (the Chairman of the Panel) is coming back from a short break abroad next weekend. After that, she and I, together with possibly one or two colleague senior elected members, would make ourselves available to see you at any time. This would be an important part of our effort to lose no opportunity of bringing an end to the present problems in our schools. After the most recent meeting of the Burnham Committee, Mrs Harrison saw both Sir Keith Joseph and the Chairman of ACAS. ACAS is using its good offices to try to take forward the process of conciliation which started in the spring. I have written to the General Secretary of the TUC, to see if we can arrange a meeting to explore any possible way out of the present dispute. We have, of course, kept all member local education authorities fully in the picture on such progress as has been possible in the national negotiations, and we are doing all we can, for our part, to see that the media are fully briefed on what is on offer to the teachers and what is at stake.

But the Government has a substantial responsibility in all this, too, and my colleagues and I need to talk to you about the dangerous polarization of a dispute which threatens education in literally every school in the country.

Please accept this letter, therefore, as an appeal for an urgent meeting. Your office can contact me at my home address, as given in this letter, but I expect to be back in London by tomorrow evening, and will be there for the next few days. I can most easily be contacted by a telephone message to the Local Authorities Conditions of Service Advisory Board at 235 6081.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John D. Pearman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

JOHN D PEARMAN

