

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

MID-DAY SUPERVISION

As the Policy Unit minute below says, there is general support for the proposal to pay for mid-day supervision by means of a specific grant, DOE have doubts about this, but are willing to go along with it. I understand that the Business Managers will not stand in the way of the necessary legislation.

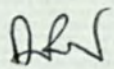
There are some points of disagreement between departments on detail, and the Policy Unit minute recommends that you should propose particular solutions to them. I agree with them, but there is more work to be done, and I suggest that at this stage you should not issue firm decisions.

Agree:

i. Sir Keith Joseph's proposal for a specific grant for mid-day supervision.

ii. you are inclined to the proposals listed on the second page of the Policy Unit note.

iii. the tactics point towards an early announcement of the decision, even if the details have not at that stage been settled?


(David Norgrove)
31 October, 1985

RAMADB

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MID-DAY SUPERVISION

There is general support for Keith Joseph's proposal to fund mid-day supervision via a legislative increase in next year's Education Support Grant (ie the specific grant run by DES).

The advantages are clear:

- head teachers, who have had an appalling time, will be relieved;
- there will be less risk of a child being run over by a bus on a dark winter day when his school refuses to offer lunch;
- the Government will be seen to be taking a constructive and conciliatory step.

There is some danger that:

- local authorities will regard this as another 'centralising' move;
- far-left authorities will be driven off using the money by the NUT;

- many authorities will delay until the legislation is through and they are sure the money is on the way.

To counter these dangers you could:

1. Ensure, as Kenneth Baker suggest, that the legislation is not used as a means of raising specific grants for other education spending. The best option is for Keith to promise that - pending the review of specific grants - expenditure other than on mid-day supervision will remain within the present statutory limit (0.5% of the RSG).

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2. Ensure that, as the Chancellor suggests:
- local authorities are given a duty to provide lunch-time supervision;
 - the unused money from this year's Education Support Grant is used to make local education authorities start mid-day supervision programmes immediately.

We recommend that you should ask Keith to press ahead with the scheme, so long as it is amended in these ways.

Oliver Letwin
OLIVER LETWIN

Peter Warr
PETER WARRY