



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

16 November 2010

John Mr Davies
C/O The Forum Clerk, School Policy & Operations
PO Box 61, County Hall
Preston
PR1 8RJ

Our Ref: LANC01062/01100769/EW

Dear John Davies

I enclose a copy of the response I have received from Lord Hill, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools, Department for Education, following my enquiries regarding the Harnessing the Technology Grant.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Hendrick'.

Mark Hendrick
Member of Parliament for Preston

MARK HENDRICK MP

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2010/0088994POJH

Lord Hill of Oareford

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools

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tel: 0870 0012345 ministers@education.gsi.gov.uk

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15 NOV 2010

Mark Hendrick MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Your ref: LANC01062/01100769/EW

9th • November 2010

Dear Mr. Hendrick,

Thank you for your letter of 23 September, addressed to the Secretary of State, enclosing correspondence from Mr John Davies, Chair of the Lancashire Schools Forum, about the Harnessing Technology Grant. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

I understand Mr Davies' concerns about the reductions in the Harnessing Technology Grant and the implications for schools in Lancashire. I should first assure you that the Department does expect that technology will support good teaching and learning. However the current fiscal climate makes it vital that the Government makes reductions in public expenditure whilst doing as much as possible to ensure that those resources get to the front line and give schools more freedom to take decisions that best suit their particular set of circumstances. This will ensure that schools can continue to develop models of good practice, including the use of information and communications technology (ICT) resources.

Technology is now generally well-embedded in schools – much more so than when the grant was first established – and so the case for a separate funding stream has diminished. We do recognise the difficulties involved, and that is why there will be one further instalment of the grant to enable local authorities and schools to plan how to manage the impact of the reduction. We recognise that broadband connectivity is part of this infrastructure but the Harnessing Technology Grant was intended to cover capital not revenue costs. Broadband subscriptions are covered by other non-capital funds and we would expect this to continue in the same way as other revenue costs.

The re-allocation of capital funding from the Harnessing Technology programme to the Free Schools programme was one of a number of budget changes made this year to reflect the new Government's priorities. This re-distribution was undertaken at national level, with an overall cut to the Harnessing Technology budget in order to make capital funds available to Free Schools, wherever they are being established.

Yours sincerely,

JONATHAN HILL 