

## Government pushes academies programme

The new coalition government wants to change the landscape for schools. It has rushed legislation through parliament that could enable all schools to become academies.

The new Academies Act takes the academy programme to a new and different level. Rather than focusing on so-called failing schools, those schools judged as outstanding have been invited to 'fast-track' to academy status. For the first time, primary and special schools

will also be able to apply to become academies.

More than 150 schools have already started talks with the Department for Education to become academies. Of these, 44 were given the all clear to open in September this year or shortly after. The rest were told to wait for the spending review this autumn. Many more schools may follow unless local communities, staff and parents make their opposition clear and reject new academy schools in their communities.

### What does becoming an academy mean for staff?

If a community school decides to become an academy it means big changes:

- Academies though state funded are in the independent sector – the tax-payer pays but academies are not accountable to the local community.
- Academies can determine pay and conditions – they can change, for example, your pay, holiday and the length of the school day.
- Academies can set their own curriculum – this could mean that they reflect commercial interests.

- Academy sponsors can be governors – this could mean a conflict of interest, especially if the sponsor comes from a private company.
- Academies are divorced from the local authority – this means they undermine an integrated approach to schooling.
- Academies will create a two-tier education system where the better off are concentrated in academies and the children from socially deprived backgrounds remain in local authority schools with less funding.

### What UNISON believes

UNISON opposes the establishment of academies for a wide range of reasons including:

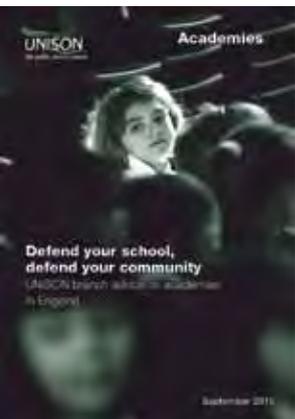
- unfair funding arrangements
- the influence of sponsors and private companies on schools
- the loss to the community
- the impact on staff pay and conditions.

We have been working closely with other education unions, the TUC, the Anti-Academies Alliance and other concerned individuals and groups to stop the process. We have written to headteachers and governors of schools giving our reasons why we oppose the creation of academies and asking heads and governors to think again.

### What you can do

- find out the truth about academies from our website and publications at: [unison.org.uk/education/defendyourschool](http://unison.org.uk/education/defendyourschool)
- talk to your colleagues and your UNISON branch about academies
- find out if your school is planning to become an academy
- get involved in UNISON's campaign to keep schools local and accountable

# N S S C H O O L S



# SOS: Save our Schools rally

UNISON and other education trade unions organised a lobby and rally at Westminster on 19 July 2010 in order to protest against the government's decision to axe school building projects. Hundreds of school staff, parents, pupils and governors attended.

The rally and lobby of parliament was a successful event with many UNISON activists joining in and engaging in the lively debates.

The event featured on both TV and radio stations. You can watch footage from the Save our Schools rally at [unison.org.uk/video/video.asp?did=11524](http://unison.org.uk/video/video.asp?did=11524)

This is just the start of action to protest at and resist the cuts planned by the coalition government.

UNISON sends a big thank you to all those who participated at short notice.



## Government cuts training for school support staff

One of the first acts of the coalition government was to cut all national funding of training for school support staff.

Over the previous six years, the Labour government funded teaching assistants (TAs) to qualify for Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) status. More than 30,000 TAs have become HLTAs. Other training supported nationally was the Support Work in Schools (SWiS) qualification at levels 2 and 3. SWiS is aimed at those who have no previous qualification and/or work across several areas in a school.

UNISON has written both to government ministers and the employers about future plans for support staff training. The government responded that it was up to local authorities and schools to fund training for support staff.

Sarah Messenger, services director of the Local Government Employers, said: "Local authorities remain committed to providing appropriate training opportunities to support staff where they can afford to do so but, in the current financial circumstances, this commitment has to be assessed against other local demands and priorities."

Since support staff are being asked to take on more and more responsibilities the need for training is as crucial as ever. Therefore training of support staff remains a necessity and UNISON will continue to campaign for the right to training.

## New information on academies

Download or order our new materials on academies from UNISON's online catalogue ([unison.org.uk/resources](http://unison.org.uk/resources)).

- *Defend Your School Defend Your Community: UNISON's advice to branches in England*, 12-page campaign guide, A5, stock no. 2930.
- *Academies Called to Account* UNISON's report and advice on the new academy programme. 20-page A4 detailed report, stock no. 2493.
- *Defend your school* leaflet, 2 sides, A5 stock no. 2937.
- *Effective Campaigning: A UNISON Guide*, A4 40 pages, stock no. 2916.

## Update: School Support Staff Negotiating Body

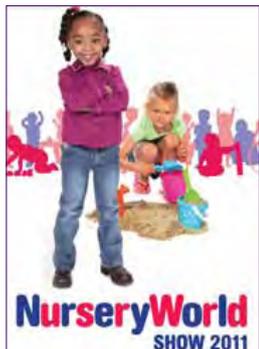
UNISON's head of education, Christina McAnea, updates us on the SSSNB.



Following the general election in May, the chair of the SSSNB was informed by the Department for Education that it was undertaking a review of the SSSNB and of support staff pay and conditions. As a result, SSSNB activities had to be put on hold. In July, the chair wrote to the secretary of state expressing concern over the delay. UNISON and the other support staff unions have also written to the secretary of state asking for an urgent meeting to discuss this. To date we have not received a reply.

It is outrageous that ministers have still not replied and said anything about the SSSNB. We will be doing everything we can to get an answer from them. The SSSNB provided school staff with expectations about improvement on pay and conditions. We will be consulting members over possible action in the very near future.

## Nursery World Show 2011



UNISON is supporting the Nursery World Show 2011. It is the leading exhibition dedicated to early years and has a mix of workshops and seminars on early years practice. The show provides a unique opportunity for early years staff to come together to discuss issues that are relevant to the sector, learn about best practice and see displays

of new ideas and the latest equipment. The show runs from 11 to 12 February 2011 at the Business Design Centre in Islington, London and registration is free.

For more information and registration details visit the Nursery World Show website: [nurseryworldshow.com](http://nurseryworldshow.com)

## Fit notes

Did you know that since April this year 'sick notes' have been replaced by 'fit notes'? The 'fit note' gives doctors two options, which allow them to confirm that their patient is either:

- not fit for work
- may be fit for some work, taking account of the GP's advice, eg a phased return to work, altered hours, amended duties or workplace adaptations.

The new approach is to help a return to work with the co-operation of the employer. UNISON has produced guidance – search "fit notes" at [unison.org.uk](http://unison.org.uk).

## Review of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Department for Education has announced a review of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The EYFS was introduced in September 2008 and established a framework of learning and development for children under the age of five.

The review is seeking the views of early years staff about the effectiveness of the EYFS and in particular; whether it is placing an unnecessary bureaucratic burden on early years staff and whether the current framework is suitable for young children.

Full details of the review and consultation documents can be found at: [education.gov.uk/consultations](http://education.gov.uk/consultations)

Early years staff can complete the consultation documents online or send comments to [b.thomas@unison.co.uk](mailto:b.thomas@unison.co.uk) to feed in to the UNISON response. The consultation closes on 30 September 2010.

## School crossing patrol stops traffic



A group of UNISON school crossing patrol staff from Greater London gathered outside Westminster to halt traffic in support of the campaign to stop the sex trafficking of children and young people. They were joined by staff and supporters from End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children and The Body Shop to announce the launch of the campaign. They are calling for everyone in the country to back the campaign and show their support by signing the petition in any Body Shop store or online at: [thebodyshop.com/stop](http://thebodyshop.com/stop)

## Health and safety latest

This year's theme is maintenance.

Get involved in the Health and Safety Executive Safe Maintenance Health Check.

Details from: [hse.gov.uk/safemaintenance/checklist.htm](http://hse.gov.uk/safemaintenance/checklist.htm)



# Join UNISON — your friend at work

PLEASE FILL IN THIS FORM IN BLOCK CAPITALS USING BLACK INK AND GIVE IT TO YOUR UNISON REP OR SEND TO THE ADDRESS BELOW

**UNISON, EDUCATION WORKFORCE UNIT, FREEPOST WC5652, LONDON WC1H 9BR**

## 1. YOUR PERSONAL DETAILS

Please tick or fill in the boxes below

Mrs	Ms	Miss	Mr	Other
First name	Other initial(s)			Date of birth / /
Surname/Family name				Home address
Postcode				National insurance number (from your payslip)

**How would you describe your ethnic origin?**

Bangladeshi
  Chinese
  Indian
  Pakistani
  Asian UK
  Asian Other
  Black UK
  Black Other
  Black
  African
  White UK
  White Other
  Irish
  Caribbean

Please tick this box if you require materials in a different format (eg large print or Braille) – be sure to supply contact details below

Please give a telephone number/voice/text/email address for UNISON to contact you – indicate if work or home

Contact tel/voice/text/email

## 2. YOUR EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

Employer's name

Your job title/occupation

Department/section

Workplace name and address

Postcode

Payroll number (from your payslip)

## 3. WHAT YOU WILL PAY – FROM 1 October 2003

Please tick the appropriate box for your earnings before deductions.

Weekly pay	Annual pay	per week	per month	Band
Up to £38.47	Up to £2,000	£0.30	£1.30	A
£38.48–£96.16	£2,001–£5,000	£0.81	£3.50	B
£96.17–£153.84	£5,001–£8,000	£1.22	£5.30	C
£153.85–£211.53	£8,001–£11,000	£1.52	£6.60	D
£211.54–£269.23	£11,001–£14,000	£1.81	£7.85	E
£269.24–£326.92	£14,001–£17,000	£2.24	£9.70	F
£326.93–£384.61	£17,001–£20,000	£2.65	£11.50	G
£384.62–£480.76	£20,001–£25,000	£3.23	£14.00	H
£480.77–£576.92	£25,001–£30,000	£3.98	£17.25	I
£576.93–£673.08	£30,001–£35,000	£4.68	£20.30	J
£673.08+	over £35,000	£5.19	£22.50	K

Please tick the appropriate box to indicate how often you are paid

Weekly  
 Fortnightly  
 Four Weekly  
 Monthly

Please tick this box if you are a student member in full-time education (including student nurses or Modern Apprentices). Your subscription is £10 per year.

## 4. POLITICAL FUND

UNISON's Affiliated Political Fund (APF) is used to campaign for and promote UNISON policy and the need for quality public services within the Labour Party, locally and nationally, in Parliament and Europe. UNISON APF affiliates to the Labour Party.

UNISON's General Political Fund (GPF) is used to pay for campaigning at branch, regional and national levels of the union and for research and lobbying in Parliament and Europe. It is independent of support for any political party.

It is important that you indicate a choice of fund by ticking one of the boxes below.

Your subscription shown above includes a political fund payment so you do not pay any more by being in one of the funds.

## 5. YOUR AUTHORISATION

- I wish to join UNISON and accept its rules and constitution.
- I authorise deduction of UNISON subscriptions from my salary/wages at the rate determined by UNISON in accordance with its rules to be paid over to them on my behalf and I authorise my employer to provide information to UNISON to keep my records up to date
- I authorise deduction of the following Political Fund payment as part of my subscription: Tick one box only

Affiliated Political Fund  General Political Fund

Now please sign and date below

Signature

Date

## OTHER WAYS TO PAY

direct debit  cheque

(please tick if appropriate)

If you have been a member of a trade union before, please state which one:

## DATA PROTECTION

UNISON will process your membership information together with other information for administration, statistical analysis, conducting ballots and other statutory requirement purposes.

We may also send you newsletters, journals and surveys and let you know about educational and campaigning matters. We will disclose your information to our service providers and agents for these purposes.

If you do not want any mailings from UNISON besides those required by statute as shown in bold above, please tick this box.

We may share your information with organisations with whom we have a business relationship for your benefit. We, or they, may contact you by mail, telephone, SMS, fax or e-mail to let you know about goods, services or promotions which we think may be of interest to you.

If you do not wish to receive such information please tick this box.