



Department
for Education

ATL response to the DfE consultation on implementing the English Baccalaureate

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Summary of questions for consultation

Pupils in scope

1. What factors do you consider should be taken into account in making decisions about which pupils should not be entered for the EBacc?

Overview

ATL believes that:

- the government's proposals to get at least 90% of pupils to take GCSEs in the EBacc subjects are completely unacceptable;
- imposing the 90% target as an accountability measure will harm many young people and must not be allowed to happen;
- making young people do the same five GCSEs - English, maths, science, a language and history or geography will narrow their choices and prevent many children from studying subjects in which they could do well;
- this proposal fails to recognise the reality that not all students are academic and this narrow curriculum will disenfranchise many. If the Government's wants to ensure that more young people fail their GCSEs, then they are certainly going the right way about it;
- this proposal ignores the importance of arts and work-related courses which could lead to good careers;
- the impact on the self-esteem of the children who are not entered for the EBacc and those who are forced to take exams which are not in their best interests is of great concern;
- there is a fatal flaw in the Government's plans, because unless it focuses on getting enough trained teachers in the classroom, it will not have enough teachers to teach EBacc or any other subjects – English and geography teachers are already in short supply;
- this will force young people to take subjects in which they have little interest instead of those they are good at and will marginalise creative subjects such as design, drama or music;
- this is policy making on the hoof. Government spends much time talking up apprenticeships as an important route and then proposes this university route-biased EBacc;
- given that 44% of graduates work in non-graduate jobs five years after graduation, imposing the EBacc in its current form will only compound this problem;
- young people need a broad and balanced curriculum that nurtures their skills and aptitudes and develops the skills needed for jobs in the 21st century, not a 1950s education based on testing and final exams.

We believe that:

- the curriculum should be about what is best for the student, not what is best for the school;

- there are real issues about students' abilities to study a foreign language and their abilities in their native language; their desire to follow a more creative curriculum including Art, Music and Drama; the national need for engineers, technicians and chefs who need to study Design subjects The fact that not all children are the same and one size doesn't fit all;
- the current curriculum offers students the best opportunity to gain the best grades they can. Students in school or further education and the courses they take need to be accessible, useful and engaging for each individual;
- students who are in lower sets will not be able to access the Ebacc. If the likelihood is that they are not going to attain a grade C or above, then this must be considered. Do not give teachers the impossible task of getting a student who can barely read and write in English, a grade C. Whilst a student may be deemed an "EBacc appropriate" student, in reality they will struggle with the subject;
- many weaker students find it difficult to cope with the increasingly academic nature of the revised GCSE specifications. It can be demotivating for pupils when they see that they are failing to achieve grades at C or above (or a 5 as it will be);
- teachers must be able to decide whether the curriculum is suitable for their individual students, e.g. are students benefiting from learning a Modern Language to GCSE if they struggle with writing and reading in English? Would a vocational /alternative curriculum not be more suitable than making the student suffer and consistently achieve low grades, which will not be good for motivation or self-confidence;
- the student's academic ability and whether an academic structure is best for the student or whether a more vocational route would be more appropriate must be taken into account;
- the learning needs of the individual student must be assessed, and those wanting to follow a creative pathway should not be persuaded to take a more academic route to meet a 90% target;
- the target displays Government's lack of recognition that Science, maths and music frequently go together (eg. Einstein, Professor Brian Cox, Patrick Moore and Dr. Brian May, to mention a few);
- literacy across the curriculum has led to ridiculous amounts of writing in subjects that in reality do not require it. English, History and Geography all test writing ability. If students are going to have to do all of those subjects then they do not need inappropriate English essay type questions in maths or writing that does not demonstrate ability in a particular subject. In reality there are a significant number of students who are not literate enough to do these subjects. For some students it would be far better for them to not follow the National Curriculum but instead follow an educational programme to improve their literacy that could eventually allow them to access other aspects of the curriculum;

- the Ebacc presents a narrowed curriculum. It offers a restricted range of subjects. All students should have a challenging and rigorous education allowing them to develop academically, creatively, scientifically and philosophically. Does the Ebacc focus on skills for employment or skills for a narrow range of university courses?
- the proposal for the EBacc measure seems perverse since we have yet to see the effect of reformed GCSEs on attainment and progression, the effect of Progress 8 on school coursing/option provision and the effect of the Post-16 TechBacc measure;
- the interests and ability of the student must be taken into account. We know that the academic route propose in the Ebacc measure does not suit all students in terms of their ability to complete academic GCSEs, but also not every more academic child wishes to study both a humanities subject and a language if that then leaves them with one other 'option' subject. This is too narrow a curriculum for many, especially students who show strength in more creative subjects;
- the standard of English shown by students should give an indication of whether they will be successful with a foreign language. Again this may include students traditionally labelled as 'more academic'. If a child is struggling to spell and use the rules of grammar in English correctly, then the problems are further compounded when trying to learn a second language. Surely it is better for students to achieve Grade 5 passes in all subjects rather than be forced to do a language which they then score a grade 4 or lower in?
- attention must be paid to students' predicted grades and their previous track record in a subject. Students own expressed motivation towards a particular subject is one of the biggest factors in success;
- ability should be taken into account. As linguists, some of our members said that they are particularly concerned about forcing everyone to do a foreign language, having taught in the days when all had to do it. Not everyone has the ability to do a foreign language;
- one member said that in his/her school, EBacc options are compulsory but they find that by Y11, the poorly behaved are being allowed to drop their MFL and are expected to get extra maths and English help, yet there are no teachers free to do this;
- career aspirations and choices plus individual strengths and aptitudes need to be closely looked as well as the preferred further/higher education pathway. Also whether a student is a confident or fragile learner and how well students can be supported, eg. the availability of TAs or study time within an option block;
- the Ebacc proposals also fail to take account students in PRUs who have had a disrupted education due to numerous factors e.g. not coping in

mainstream due to frequent moves between foster families, bullying, ASC, OCD, mental health, domestic violence, parental/sibling suicide etc. They often have only a short time to catch-up on key subjects and come from many different schools, having studied different languages and often not even remembering what they have done;

- EBacc subjects are geared only to academically inclined pupils. Decisions need to be based on whether a child achieves best with traditional academic subjects or with practical subjects (such as PE, resistant materials, engineering, food technology etc.);
- in areas like Kent where there is an insistence on retaining an outdated system segregated through both gender and ability (via the 11+), EBacc will clearly have a higher take-up in grammar schools;
- literacy and numeracy problems, SEND considerations and behavioural issues should be assessed on an individual basis, not as a blanket or automatic disapplication but a one to one conversation with home and student;
- some students who are driven by a specific career aspiration, such as architecture, may want to study more topics in the 3rd bucket such as fine art or technology as well as the school requesting RE. This leaves a student little option for their 2nd bucket. Weaker students who struggle to make progress in English find languages harder and alongside having to take History or Geography, their work home balance becomes too overloaded;
- it is stating the obvious, but students' wellbeing and happiness must be factored in. Why make students do History and French and get 2 Us when they could take Design and Technology or PE and get higher grades?

Accountability for meeting the EBacc commitment

2. Is there any other information that should be made available about schools' performance in the EBacc?

Our members said:

- that there shouldn't be an Ebacc requirement. School contexts vary widely and the EBacc is not in the best interests of learners;
- the number gaining it should relate to the number who actually took it. How many parents will be that interested in the EBacc performance measure when they realise how constrictive the arrangement is and how it will reduce their child's choices so dramatically. There should be no accountability for EBacc at all and it should not be included in Ofsted judgements - the whole policy is flawed;
- the other subjects that schools/colleges offer and how well those subjects are doing should be made available:

- the demographic of the cohort because you cannot compare like for like. The social and economic background of the catchment area and the value added data;
- the ability profile for the school and pupil premium take-up as well as the percentage of pupils following intervention programmes for basic skills in English;
- the KS2 student scores of students who decide they don't want to study those subjects compared to EBacc achievement;
- not attainment (the final grade achieved), but more importantly achievement, i.e. the progress made by students should be reported;
- value added is very important - some students arrive in secondary school having had previous experiences of MFL, others don't;
- a school's performance in the EBacc is no real indicator of the quality or breadth of education provided. In fact it could be argued that evidence that more students at a school are being shoe-horned into this particular view of what education is best for, is an indicator of lack of diversity and opportunity available at that school;
- number of students with SEND Performance linked to attendance;
- accountability should be weighted by the number of students entered for EBacc, and a separate attainment figure provided for non-EBacc entrants. Schools should be allowed discretion to justify non-entrants based upon the potential attainment of a specific candidate within Ebacc;
- it appears that the only people interested in the EBacc are the government and Ofsted. Parents and students don't seem to be bothered about it;
- it should be linked to prior attainment i.e. what proportion of students would be expected to study EBacc subjects from their KS2 data;

3. How should this policy apply to UTCs, studio schools and further education colleges teaching key stage 4 pupils?

Our members said:

- it should not, just as it should not in schools. However, many would argue that it should be an even playing field for all educational establishments. Given that, if the policy were to apply to UTCs, studio schools and further education (FE) colleges teaching key stage 4 pupils, then no this cannot be fairly applied unless you only take into account students on a EBacc style course i.e. a wholly academic course;
- because it would not be appropriate to apply the policy to UTCs, studio schools and FE colleges teaching key stage 4 pupils, there would then have to be two accountability systems;

- the policy proposal also assumes that in every region there are sufficient numbers of UTCs, studio schools and FE colleges to provide teaching for key stage 4 pupils. When the area reviews have been completed, there will probably be far fewer;
- other members said that they should be exempt as they are focusing on practical, useful skills that can be taken directly into the work place or adult living. These are often students who are not suited to Gove's vision of a school results factory;
- wasn't the idea of these other educational environments to give students more of a choice and to allow for very specific interests? Forcing them into the EBacc seems ridiculous.

Implementation

4. What challenges have schools experienced in teacher recruitment to EBacc subjects?

Our members said:

- we are finding it hard to recruit teachers into all roles. Who knew that vilifying us in the press, undermining our pay and benefits and working us to death would have an effect?
- there aren't enough teachers and there's no money to attract people. STEM subjects are particularly in demand in both private and public workforces;
- certainly in MFL it is not easy to recruit teachers and retain them because of the pressures of trying to teach students who are not cut out to take the EBacc and the subsequent pressure of targets from SLT;
- non EBacc subject teachers can be hard to recruit (such as RS) and will be increasingly so;
- it is difficult to both recruit and retain teachers of History and Geography due the high demands which these subjects make on pupils in terms of literacy and language used both in the questions set and the sources provided in the exams;
- teacher recruitment is a huge challenge especially in the north of England;
- schools are struggling to recruit in most subjects before you even start looking at EBacc subjects. Staff are being asked to teach subject that they have either not taught for a long time or subjects that they may not have touched since A levels when they were being taught it;
- it is very difficult to recruit specialist teachers so other curriculum teachers are being asked to teach a second subject which is causing stress and sometimes a drop in standards;

- there could be further problems of over-staffing encountered if students are channelled away from fully-staffed popular non-EBacc subjects. The biggest area of concern has to be languages factored against Art, Music and D&T departments;
- workload and pressure have decimated the number of applicants to posts in EBacc subjects, particularly English, maths, Science, History, Geography and MFL;
- there is a national recruitment crisis in maths and Science, especially in Physics. Many schools will have non specialist teachers teaching some EBacc subjects;
- one member said that their school does not have a languages teacher. The only way to get one would be to sack the ICT or Art teacher and drop these subjects. And as their students arrive any time from Y7-11 from different schools which language would we pick?
- there are teacher shortages in the majority of EBacc subjects so the government needs to make teaching a more attractive career. To achieve this they need to restore the pay scales and scrap the pay-freezes and in order to retain the teachers that are left;
- where schools can pick from a group eg Sciences they will recruit a teacher in one of those subjects which may mean that the other Science subjects are not taught. For example, Computer Science is part of the EBacc as it is part of the science group, but finding suitably qualified staff is difficult. Also, if a school is already offering Chemistry say, then why offer Computer Science as well. This may equally be the case for languages and humanities;
- one member said that their school is well-staffed for MFL but only because the teachers are resilient. Humanities subjects struggle to recruit, but are currently fine. Student behaviour is challenging because the students don't want to do the subjects;
- German language provision is dying out in favour of Spanish. The number of pupils choosing languages at GCSE and beyond has been declining since 2005, hence the lack of teachers;
- why would anyone want to teach classes of option subjects full of students who do not want to be there and will not achieve?

5. What strategies have schools found useful in attracting and retaining staff in these subjects?

- working to improve morale, not to meet unreasonable targets. Valuing teachers and TAs, using and building their skills;
- one member said that he/she has left state education and gone to private education as this then avoids the whims of politicians. Many of the teacher's new colleagues have recently left state education;

- more favourable working conditions including:
 - fair pay progression;
 - adequate SLT support for challenging behaviour;
 - a fair and manageable timetable;
 - good range of practical facilities and sensible classroom spaces;
 - a pleasant and positive environment;
 - helpful CPD support and a well organised calendar;
 - SLT supportive to staff;
 - Incentives including responsibility;
- recruiting PGCE students very early on in their training although this can be risky.

6. What approaches do schools intend to take to manage challenges relating to the teaching of EBacc subjects?

Our members said:

- in terms of schools' approaches to manage challenges relating to the teaching of EBacc subjects, they are hoping that most will defy the government and instead provide a good student-centred approach to the curriculum;
- "I can't speak for other schools, I know that my head doubts the wisdom of a one size fits all curriculum and may ignore the 90% target";
- "They get non-specialists to "babysit" classes whilst the Head of Department plans lessons for them to read out";
- they will have to expand teaching departments if 90% or more of students are to take the EBacc as the timetable load will increase;
- some schools are trying to maintain the status of non-EBacc subjects so that students don't get too narrow a view of which subjects are important;
- how are Ofsted likely to react? Will inspectors recognise this significant change as a viable reason for any drop in the quality of delivery which is bound to occur as non- specialists are diverted into teaching EBacc subjects?
- some schools are focusing on French or Spanish as the first MFL choice, as they are offered these in feeder primaries, rather than other languages, eg. German. This is a lack of diversification though, and in languages, will lead to a return to an emphasis on French;
- many schools have gone down the route of choosing GCSE subjects at the end of Yr 8. This seems to be removing a year of study in many Arts subjects and therefore results in fewer teachers of these subjects being needed;
- schools are investigating courses which may be more accessible to students with SEND, given that the EBacc won't be;

- one member said that they are abandoning their previous "Pathways" policy which divided the year group into two groups, one targeted to EBacc and one less so. This was never aimed at satisfying EBacc regulations, however, more to ensure a broad base of facilitating subjects for potential Russell Group students' A level choices, which included:
 - rigorous interview and discussion process with option choices
 - support in over-subscribed subjects with large classes (not possible to double-up sets in the same option block with a single subject-specialist);
 - training non-specialists for KS3 delivery of e.g. Geography to allow the specialist to teach in two option blocks;
 - provision of a fast-track second language course beginning in Year 10;
 - targeted TA support to support fragile learners by timetabling study support in one option block;
 - putting the needs of the student first and where there is good reason not to follow an EBacc pathway, not insisting;
- having students make subject choices early in year 9 so that the curriculum can be scheduled around the demand as well as teacher recruitment;
- recruitment of more teachers;
- restricting option choices for students thereby not giving students an education entitlement that best suits the needs of the individual.

7. Other than teacher recruitment, what other issues will schools need to consider when planning for increasing the number of pupils taking the EBacc?

Our members said:

- that this policy will sink the creative subjects like Art, Drama and Music. The lack of these subjects and the skills they provide will damage the economy, and the same is the case for the Design subjects. The country needs designers, engineers and technicians and local industries repeatedly say that they need graduates with those skills;
- schools need to be prepared to have a lot of disgruntled children who are being forced to take subjects they don't like and a lot of disgruntled staff trying to teach subjects to those who aren't interested;
- the impact of bad inspection outcomes from Ofsted as results plummet;
- class sizes- these should be no bigger than 20-22 if the teacher is to teach the GCSE courses effectively;
- more CPD for staff via the awarding organisations would be very helpful;
- the fact that other important subjects may be neglected and students start to think they are studying second rate subjects if they do non EBacc ones, also curriculum will become even more narrow and uniform. Schools with low

achieving students may wish to spend even more time on EBacc subjects at the expense of others that are more engaging for low achieving students thus perpetuating their sense of disillusionment and disengagement with education;

- strategies will have to be developed to teach these subjects successfully to less motivated students. This may require extra resources which with current budgetary constraints may not be available;
- there will be less curriculum time for Bucket 3 subjects;
- classroom space - what happens to teachers in subjects outside the EBacc, which will have a reduction in teaching hours;
- facilities of the school e.g. number of computer rooms, size of classes and classrooms, staffing, equipment, additional support and TAs;
- what subjects are viable and cost effective to run;
- disinterest from students, lack of enthusiasm. Students need to see the value of EBacc and not just another government initiative that they neither like nor want to conform to;
- negative reactions from parents. Already parents are asking for reassurance that their children will have the freedom to choose the subjects they enjoy;
- the impact of enforcing the EBacc on students who have been used to greater diversity and choice, which may be behavioural and/or academic - unless the school can generate the required positivity amongst students;
- reduced spending and opportunities for students in practical creative and specialist arts facilities;
- targeted support for students who may previously have followed a more vocational curriculum;
- impact on creative subjects; impact on future recruitment in industries where creative subjects are valued;
- financial pressures. The conflict between the desire to do the EBacc and the desire to take other, equally academic, but preferred subjects, e.g. choosing music over geography or history in options;
- the decay of subjects not included in the EBacc. Some of these subjects have expensive equipment. Once they are gone it will be too expensive to bring them back if the government finally realise there is a shortage of skills in those areas;
- resources. One member said that due to a poor budget, the school is using textbooks that are 7 years old and full of graffiti and they do not have enough textbooks for teaching more pupils at GCSE;

- the need for extra subject specific rooms for EBacc subjects. Ensuring non-EBacc subjects remain high profile so that all subjects are viewed as equal amongst staff, students and parents alike;
- impact on staffing of A-level subjects for those GCSE subjects (such as Business Studies) which are not included in the Ebacc;
- resources such as the need for exam halls, and 1:1 provision for more students in exams.

8. What additional central strategies would schools like to see in place for recruiting and training teachers in EBacc subjects?

Our members said:

- they wouldn't. They don't want the Ebacc policy to be implemented, they want strategies in place for recruiting good teachers across the full range of subjects not just an elite and narrow set of subjects;
- a reduction in workload for all teachers, in all institutions including EBacc teachers. Protected PPA must increase;
- on the practical side leaders are in particular concerned about the cost of implementation. An impact assessment would have revealed the significant cost of retraining teachers into EBacc subjects from those that are being frozen out by this reform. At a time of funding pressures and with ever fewer schools sitting on reserves there are big concerns over how this will be funded;
- that there is an issue with the Exam Boards having the new specifications and texts available early enough to allow teachers adequate time to prepare for teaching. At present all these changes are only being finalised a few months before we need to start teaching the courses. This creates additional stresses and pressures for staff;
- time for all relevant training and a training budget and scheme that means quality CPD and not just delivering CPD with no support;
- initial teacher training should be university based, not school based;
- one member said – “as a teacher of a non-EBacc subject, I think the issue is more about how on earth schools are going to retain their non-EBacc subject teachers! I appreciate I am seeing this from the perspective of a small school where in many subjects one teacher is responsible for everyone across Years 7-13, but many of us feel deeply disillusioned and threatened. We are facing drops in recruitment at GCSE which are impacting on A level uptake, in conjunction with sixth form funding cuts. Art, Music, Drama and some of the Technology subjects could disappear from KS4 and 5 in time, leaving part-time jobs with greatly diminished job satisfaction - quite apart from the impact on students' broader education!”

- ongoing training and support from Exam Boards without the exorbitant price tag;
- the provision of better funding. Where schools are mainly academic, with fewer pupil premium students, they are facing enormous financial pressure;
- forward thinking. Consultations on these issues should not take place once EBacc is a measure it should be carried out prior to the government stating what the changes are going to be;
- phased-in over time; more recruitment of teachers in proper training places.

Impact on pupils with protected characteristics

9. Do you think that any of the proposals have the potential to have an impact, positive or negative, on specific pupils, in particular those with 'relevant protected characteristics'? (The relevant protected characteristics are disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.) Please provide evidence to support your response.

Our members said:

- young people who have an EHCP are legally entitled to a “personalised curriculum”, to help them achieve their individual outcomes. There is a real contradiction between this entitlement and the EBacc policy. What if a student is in mainstream education but the personalised curriculum that they are entitled to is not EBacc specific, the school does not have the capacity (due to teacher shortages and budgetary restraint) to offer the courses necessary? This could lead to exclusion by provision. Parents could, in theory, take a school to tribunal over this. Whether or not the student could be disappplied from the EBacc data is irrelevant if a school would not have sufficient timetable flexibility to run the necessary courses for this group of students;
- failure to get the personalised curriculum may be deemed a breach of the Equality Act, as the personalised curriculum may be regarded as a ‘reasonable adjustment’, dependent upon whether the young person is disabled according to the Act;
- that as SENCOs, they have direct experience of the negative impact, on some students, of the expectation to achieve 8 academic GCSEs. For students with EHCPs, who have significant learning difficulties, the body of knowledge that they are required to learn, understand, retrieve and apply, when GCSEs are, effectively undifferentiated, presents such a barrier to achievement that self-esteem is destroyed. Disapplication for these students is easier. We have more significant issues with those students who have higher academic targets, based on KS2 results, often achieved with 1:1 readers/scribes. There is huge pressure on schools to ensure that

these students achieve EBacc, but the greater analytical demands at GCSE level is a further barrier to achievement, particularly for our students on the autistic spectrum. Schools are under pressure; teachers are under pressure and students are under pressure to meet targets and the result is an escalation in serious mental health difficulties, which, for some students, prevents them from achieving any qualifications;

- for SEND students particularly, it is far better that they are given access to non-Ebacc subjects where they could get at least a C grade, than struggle with an EBacc subject which they cannot achieve in;
- they believe the policy will have an effect on all students. The subjects that are being squeezed out are the subjects that those pupils with protected characteristics and many other pupils in the top 90% of abilities are most likely to find useful in pursuing a career;
- not all students are suitable for EBacc subjects and the policy will put some students off learning for life, especially creative students;
- with a large number of students with English as an additional language and their background of gender inequality, it is difficult to see how EBacc will have a positive impact;
- the proposals will have an impact on all students in restricting their KS4 choices and this would be exacerbated in the case of the students with relevant protected characteristics mentioned above;
- students will lack the opportunity to develop self-expression and creativity and to access potential vocational pathways;
- one member said that they have had to reduce their vocational programme to focus on EBacc for as many students as possible. For some students, having to do a Humanities GCSE, for example, rather than Motor Vehicle Engineering has resulted in demotivation and loss of self-esteem;
- there are some types of disability e.g. cerebral palsy, which make spoken foreign language skills very difficult to assess and would reduce a student's chance of gaining a meaningful qualification in those subjects;
- these pupils will be further disadvantaged by the emphasis placed on the EBacc as a gold standard which they will not have access to due to missing education whilst coping with bullying, depression, self-harming, moving schools before working towards gender reassignment. Members said that they can have up to 25% pupils in a class in this situation in their PRU;
- they are concerned that pressure to do the EBacc will result in students taking unsuitable subjects, leading to an increase in feelings of failure and loss of self-esteem and being unable to access a suitable career path in which they can make a positive contribution to the world;

- students who are preoccupied with bigger problems in their own lives are generally reluctant to study a language. The MFL aspect of the EBacc will probably cause the most problems. Students already have to do English, maths and Science so the problems will not change that exist now. MFL is already the least popular subject. There is also the big issue of grading in MFL in comparison to other subjects, making it off putting for students with lower expectations of success for whatever the reason. If this is not seriously considered then the EBacc will not happen;
- the figures for the uptake of the EBacc subjects since 2005 show that students do not choose languages, eg. the decline of German and even French in favour of Spanish;
- education should be an open, fair and unbiased experience. In a world when there are more choices than ever to be made it seems ironic that our government is dictating the choice a student makes towards their own education. We should be guiding students through greater choice not clipping their wings and saying they have to study specific subjects. This policy smacks of a very middle-class Anglo-centric view of the world which will disadvantage many students, particularly those with protected characteristics or who are disadvantaged.

10. How could any adverse impact be reduced to better advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it? Please provide evidence to support your response.

Our members said:

- do not go ahead with the Ebacc. Stop assessing schools on the number of students who take EBacc subjects, stop dividing pupils into academic and non-academic so punitively, stop behaving as if children are blank slates to be written on;
- stop turning the clock back. It is crucial that vocational qualifications are recognised as having sufficient rigour and being as equally valid as the 'traditional EBacc' academic qualifications. We should celebrate creativity and engineering acumen;
- allow funding for GCSEs to be extended into Y12 for pupils not ready to move on. Provide funding for elective college courses after school for languages;
- in MFL there is not much provision for SEND pupils in the assessment of the exams, particularly in the foreign language writing skills assessment. The accuracy of the language is marked as is with no allowance for dyslexia for example.

11. Any further comments?

Our members said:

- the 90% EBacc target is madness. All young people are different, they should be allowed to explore and develop their capabilities and squashing out the creative and Design subjects is damaging to the future of our economy. We need equality of opportunity for all students;
- there are too many changes happening too quickly with no time to embed anything or to develop strategies and teaching, with little or no training;
- forcing the EBacc on schools and possibly colleges is a backwards step and should be stopped now. What has happened to personalised learning to suit the student? What has happened to providing choice and opportunity?
- the EBacc measure has already had a massive negative impact on students with many forced down (for them) an inappropriate academic route; all students should be enjoying their education with access to sport, music, dance, art, drama etc.;
- current academy agreements promise freedoms and flexibilities for leaders to alight on the most appropriate curriculum for their context. If the EBacc is being imposed on everyone from above how does this sit with current agreements and will changes be made for those entering into academy agreements in future? If this significant curriculum change goes ahead how can leaders and governors be sure other freedoms won't be taken away in future?
- forcing the EBacc on students is short sighted and attaches a status to a group of subjects which elevates them to a position of superiority in comparison with other subjects. This cannot be a good thing. How are students to feel when the subject that they love is consigned to an inferior status? Why are we attaching less status to creative subjects when creativity and innovation are skills the contemporary workplace is telling us they need. Compelling students to focus on a narrow range of subjects can only lead to loss of enthusiasm and motivation for many;
- the EBacc policy assumes that every child is academic. Where it will fail is that it will cause an enormous number of students who do not excel at these subjects to feel that they have failed if they do not manage to achieve C or above in the EBacc subjects. This will result in a large number of pupils leaving school with low self-esteem - something many of them have been battling throughout school.