# Concerns over costly executive roles in schools impact education funding



Concerns have been raised about the increasing presence of corporate-style executive roles within schools and the financial impact these positions have on educational resources. Several education professionals and observers have voiced their opinions on the expansion of multi-academy trusts (MATs) and their management structures, highlighting the potential consequences for students, teachers, and school support staff.

Jonny Crawshaw, City of York councillor, has criticised the trend of creating costly executive positions within schools, describing it as an “outrage and tragic betrayal” of students and teachers. A former headteacher recounted their experience at a local authority secondary school where neighbouring schools converted to single-academy trust status. Governing bodies promoted existing heads to “executive head” roles with increased salaries while appointing “heads of school” on lower wages to manage daily operations. The former headteacher noted, “Suddenly, and for no discernible benefit to students, the cost of headship had doubled.” They further observed that MATs tend to generate even more executive roles, which they described as “costly and superfluous,” draining funds from the education system and diminishing local authority services for schools that remain outside such trusts.

Caroline Tollemache, from London, shared insights into how the academy system affects school finances and staff morale. She cited examples such as senior school staff taking long-haul flights abroad to observe overseas teaching methods, as well as holding leadership meetings in expensive venues with costly catering. In contrast, support staff are often expected to bring their own supplies, including teabags, and even take on specialised roles like speech therapy and educational psychology due to funding shortages. Tollemache remarked, “A school should be a centre for learning, not a business,” and expressed concerns about the diminished financial accountability within the system. She also noted a change in job titles, with the traditional "school bursar" role being replaced by "business manager," reflecting what she sees as a shift towards corporatisation.

Echoing these views, Lia Campos from Cambridge highlighted the impact of high-salaried executives in primary school MATs. She reported that salaries for roles such as CEOs and CFOs can range from £110,000 to £140,000, potentially diverting resources away from essential frontline staff such as teachers and teaching assistants. Campos pointed out that a MAT overseeing eight schools might divert around £500,000 from education into administrative costs, which is particularly significant as schools face the prospect of redundancies among teaching staff due to budget constraints. She called for greater oversight, suggesting that the Department for Education (DfE) audit the allocation of general annual grant funds by MATs, and welcomed the idea of Ofsted or DfE inspections of these trusts.

These concerns paint a picture of growing unease within the education sector about the increasing managerialisation of schools and the financial implications of expanding MAT executive roles. While supporters of the academy system argue that autonomy can lead to innovation, critics worry about the diversion of funds from direct educational purposes and the impact on staff and student wellbeing.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/multi-academy-trusts-mats> - This URL provides information on multi-academy trusts, which are central to the article's discussion about the expansion of executive roles within schools and their financial impacts.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/education> - Reports from news sources like the BBC often cover educational trends, including the debate over the corporatisation of schools and the effects of multi-academy trusts.
* <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/education-committee/inquiries/hefes-2022/multi-academy-trusts> - The UK Parliament's Education Committee has investigated issues related to multi-academy trusts, including their management structures and financial implications.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted> - Ofsted plays a crucial role in inspecting and evaluating educational institutions, including those under multi-academy trusts, relevant to concerns about accountability and resource allocation.
* <https://www.ft.com/content/065a22d6-5c01-4141-a338-197ce44a1a6b> - The Financial Times covers topics related to business and economics in education, including the trend towards corporatisation and its financial implications.