

Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP
Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
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By Email: bridget.phillipson.mp@parliament.uk

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Dear Secretary of State Phillipson,

On behalf of all connected to the Council of British International Schools (COBIS), I am writing to congratulate you on your appointment as Secretary of State for Education.

In addition, it's my pleasure to introduce you to COBIS – a membership association representing c.500 high-quality schools and organisations in more than 80 countries worldwide. Certainly, we share your passion for education and your commitment to making sure young people across the UK and worldwide get the opportunities they deserve. Therefore, we look forward to working with you to support your mission. In particular, we feel that COBIS and our sector provides a valuable international dimension, insight and expertise to support your work across safeguarding, curriculum and assessment reform, teacher recruitment, retention and development.

COBIS' mission is to support and empower all British international schools in their provision of high-quality education. Our vision is to reach and connect all British international school communities in order to support them in developing students who will have a positive impact on society.

The following guiding principles are integral in everything that COBIS does and at the very heart of the organisation:

- **Inclusivity:** We work with schools to ensure that every student and member of staff, in a broad range of school contexts, feels that they belong.
- **Collaboration:** We work in partnership with others aligned with our mission, vision and guiding principles, to ensure our members flourish and receive maximum value.
- **Ambition:** We continue to challenge ourselves to innovate and grow, as always with students as our focus. We stay true to our quality provision and the integrity of our practice.

As an inclusive organisation, with a deep commitment to long term school improvement, COBIS offers a range of services to our schools including quality assurance, through our rigorous Accreditation and Compliance scheme which is externally validated by the UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), safer recruitment checks, safeguarding and extensive professional development and networking, student competitions and sector research.

Representing COBIS and other Associations that represent high-quality British international schools, I am a member of the Ministerially chaired, Department for Education and Department for Business and Trade, Education Sector Advisory Group (ESAG). Working with Departmental Officials and other constituent members of ESAG, which represent the ecosystem of high caliber British education exports, together we identify and harness opportunities along with tackling real and perceived barriers to students and learning institutions worldwide.

In partnership with:

COBIS shares your urgency, drive and ambition to recruit 6,500 high-quality teachers and we are well placed to support. On an international scale, working closely with the DfE, COBIS has contributed to the development and promotion of iQTS, and are pleased that its introduction is making a positive impact on the global teacher workforce. Drawing on evidence from our published research connected to teacher supply, we are acutely aware that teachers move in both directions between the domestic and international sectors. Within this 'virtuous cycle', teachers considering returning to the UK still face significant barriers.

Our research has also shown that international opportunities play a significant role in retaining teachers within the profession. In the 2022 COBIS report on Teacher Supply in British International Schools, 43% of incoming teachers said they were thinking about leaving the profession before taking up an international job.

We firmly believe that positioning teaching as a global profession, with opportunities to work both at home and abroad, would contribute to an effective long-term strategy to increase the attractiveness of the profession, to increase recruitment to ITT, to increase overall retention within the profession and most importantly to strengthen learning outcomes for children and young people with British schools in the UK and overseas.

COBIS, and the high-quality British international schools within our membership, are keen to support you and your Department, for the benefit of schools, students and the communities which they serve.

Finally, I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your team to explore ways in which COBIS can collaborate and serve in a way that will make a positive impact and difference to the lives of our valued educational professionals and the children and young people in their care.

Yours sincerely,



Colin Bell
COBIS CEO