



22 November 2012

Mr P McCallion  
Committee Clerk  
Education Committee  
Room 243,Parliament Buildings  
Stormont  
BELFAST BT4 3XX

Dear Mr McCallion

### **Education and Skills Authority (Education Bill)**

I am writing on behalf of the Governors of Campbell College to express our grave concerns in respect of a number of clauses and schedules of the Bill as it now stands.

The College is not opposed to the creation of ESA to replace the Education and Library Boards if it is to add consistency to decision making and make savings in administration costs which in turn will lead to more funds reaching "front line" education. We do, however, believe that, if ESA is given the powers proposed in the Bill, it will have a hugely detrimental effect on all the schools in the voluntary sector, voluntary grammar schools especially, and stand in stark contrast to the direction of travel in England where more and more funding and decision-making responsibility are devolved directly to Boards of Governors of schools that are being taken out of local education authority control to become Academies.

The Bill seeks to remove the powers of Governors in schools such as ours to employ their own staff and manage their own budgets, something that they have managed successfully and efficiently for over 60 years, along the way providing excellent educational outcomes for their pupils. We believe very strongly that Governors are best placed to manage the affairs of their schools and maintain their ethos and values.

I intend to write to all our parents detailing the possible outcomes that may arise should this Bill go through in its current form. I will ask them to write to their local representatives expressing their concerns and their opposition to this Bill which could be catastrophic for their school and their children's education in the widest sense.

I attach a schedule to this letter which details the **main** areas in the Bill to which we are opposed and the amendments that we believe must be made to make this Bill "workable".

Yours faithfully

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*M E J Graham*  
*Chair of the Board of Governors*

**EDUCATION AND SKILLS AUTHORITY (EDUCATION BILL)**

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS (November 2012)**

**1. Employment of Staff**

Section 3(1) All teachers and other persons who are appointed to work under a contract of employment on the staff of a grant-aided school shall be employed by ESA.

Proposed All teachers and other persons who are appointed to work under a contract of employment on the staff of a grant-aided school shall be employed by ESA save that in the case of a voluntary school such teachers and other persons appointed to work under a contract of employment shall be employed by ESA as the agent for the Board of Governors of that school.

*This will ensure that Boards of Governors will retain the same powers they currently enjoy as was intended in the Heads of Agreement.*

**2. Decisions of the Board of Governors**

Section 9(3) Where ESA is of the opinion that a decision of the Board of Governors on any matter which fails to be taken in accordance with such a scheme was taken otherwise than in accordance with the scheme, ESA may require the Board of Governors to reconsider the matter.

Proposed Where ESA is of the opinion that a decision of the Board of Governors on any matter which fails to be taken in accordance with such a scheme was taken otherwise than in accordance with the scheme, ESA may require or in the case of a voluntary school, may request the Board of Governors to reconsider the matter.

### **3. Contracts for premises**

Section 20(1)ESA may enter into contracts for, or in connection with, the provision or alteration of the premises of a grant-aided school

Proposed ESA may enter into contracts for, or in connection with, the provision or alteration of the premises of a grant-aided school,

save than in the case of a voluntary school, ESA may only enter into such contracts with consent of the Board of Governors of that school.

*The College is a Voluntary B Grammar School and as such funds and owns all its premises.*

### **4. Area Planning**

It is essential that Boards of Governors are involved in the consultation process relating to the provision of education for schools in their area. We oppose the current format of the Education Bill where ESA is to be given sole responsibility for area planning and is not obliged to consult Boards of Governors in that area.

### **5. Representation**

We note that the Voluntary Grammar Sector has no representation on the proposed ESA Board despite educating over 30% of post primary pupils in Northern Ireland. This is not acceptable.

### **6. Support of GBA amendment proposals**

We have reviewed the additional amendments to the Bill as proposed and submitted by the Governing Bodies Association and we are in full agreement thereof.