



Mr John O'Dowd MLA
 Minister for Education
 Northern Ireland Assembly
 Parliament Buildings
 Stormont
 Belfast
 BT4 3XX

Monday 21st January 2013

Dear Minister

I write on behalf of the Board of Governors of Glenraig Integrated Primary School regarding the proposed amendments to the Education Bill, currently in committee stage in the Assembly, to facilitate the establishment of ESA. We wish to highlight a number of concerns we have with this Bill in its present form.

Both the Education Reform Order (1989) and the Belfast Agreement (1998) place an obligation on the Department of Education to "encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education that is the education together of Catholic and Protestant children"

Under clause 2(5) of the Education Bill, there is a duty on ESA to encourage and facilitate the development of education in an Irish speaking school but no corresponding duty on ESA regarding integrated education. We in Glenraig IPS feel that the Education Bill must be amended further so that it stipulates clearly ESA's requirement to uphold the Department's statutory obligation to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education.

We also want to express our concern that there is no representation for integrated education on the board, as constituted at the moment. In fact, at this moment the board reflects and indeed reinforces, the segregated nature of our educational system and

divided society. In order to meet the statutory obligation referred to above it is essential that there must be representation on the board from the integrated movement who have worked tirelessly over the last thirty years to build a better future for our children and society through a commitment to educating children together.

Glenraig Integrated Primary School
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 Web: www.glenraigips.co.uk

Principal: Mrs Shaunagh McKirgan



Glencraig IPS has a pupil enrolment of 223; we serve 169 families. We are consistently oversubscribed each January and this year had 46 applications for our 30 P1 places. Since our transformation in 2005 we have educated 440 children. In addition, we have a staff of eleven teachers, six classroom assistants, secretary, caretaker and principal.

Where is the representation on ESA for the staff, children and families who are part of an integrated school and the much greater number of the wider public who support this type of education? It is inequitable and unjust that those choosing Integrated Education should be denied representation on the Board of ESA. Glencraig IPS requests that representation on the board of ESA for the integrated sector be a matter of right.

The Education Bill outlines responsibilities under Area Based Planning for the establishment of new controlled and new Catholic Maintained schools but there appears to be no mechanism for the establishment of new integrated schools either controlled or grant maintained. It is not clear how a new integrated school might open under ESA or how parental demand for integration might be supported under ESA. Glencraig IPS argues that that the mechanism for opening new integrated schools, must be written into the Education Bill.

This school, along with the wider integrated movement, has grave concerns about the limitations of ABP as the model used to date to frame the area based planning process, based as it is on a sectarian headcount of children within the straitjacket of the existing sectors.

Glencraig IPS argues there should be a duty on ESA to maximize opportunities for integrating education within a system of sustainable schools and this places even greater need for the inclusion of a clear mechanism for schools to transform both individually or together through an amalgamation.

Glencraig IPS understands that the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education has submitted a number of amendments which would write into the bill an acknowledgement of the statutory obligation to facilitate and encourage Integrated Education and which would ensure representation for Integrated Education on the board. Glencraig IPS registers their support of these amendments.

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Finally, we see an opportunity in ESA to shape a new educational landscape, one which does not reflect or further embed the divisions of the past. We seek assurance that every step will be taken to ensure that ESA can play a positive role in shaping such a future,

The omission of this commitment from the Bill and the almost total failure to mention Integrated Education in any parts of the Bill is striking and concerning. We trust our concerns will be acted on and that this situation will be rectified.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. McKirgan", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Shaunagh McKirgan
Principal Glencraig IPS

Cc: Mervyn Storey, Chair of the Education Committee ✓

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