

**INTEGRATED
EDUCATION FUND**

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Mervyn Storey
Chair of Education Committee
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3XX

06 December 2012

Dear Mervyn

Re: Education Bill

I would like to thank you and your committee for the opportunity given to IEF to present on the Education Bill at its meeting of 05 December. We welcomed what was a useful engagement in highlighting some of the key concerns the integrated movement hold in relation to the Education Bill in its current format.

The IEF understand that the committee is scheduled to begin the legislative scrutiny process early in the New Year. What follows is a summary of the key changes IEF is anxious to see made to the Education Bill:

1. Recognition of Integrated Education

An explicit statement within Article 2 (5) of the Bill, that the duties and functions of the Education and Skills Authority (ESA) will be carried out in a way which reflects the statutory duty placed on the Department to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education

2. ESA Board Representation

Schedule 1 (2) should be revised as follows:

- (I) 2 shall be persons appearing to the Department to represent the interests of transferors of controlled schools
- (II) 2 shall be persons appearing to the Department to represent the interests of trustees of maintained schools
- (III) 2 shall be persons appearing to the Department to represent the interests of integrated schools
- (IV) 1 shall be a person appearing to the Department to represent the interests of the Irish-Medium sector
- (V) 3 shall be persons appearing to the Department, so far as practicable, to be representative of the community in Northern Ireland
- (VI) 2 shall be persons appearing to the Department to represent the interests of the business community in Northern Ireland

Advertisement of ESA Board posts

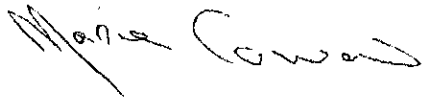
Finally, we in IEF are extremely alarmed by recent actions taken by the Department of Education to publicly advertise for the posts of Chair, and for four community representatives to sit on the new ESA Board. Clearly, such a recruitment process pre-empts the allocation of seats to be given to certain groups of stakeholders. This is before the outcome of the legislative scrutiny process which has still to be undertaken by the Education Committee is even known.

In relation to the point of allocation of seats onto the new ESA Board, we have made representations to the Equality Commission on this issue, on equality grounds under Section 75. We would very much welcome anything the committee could do to encourage the Department to postpone this process, at least until after the committee stage is concluded.

I am confident we can count on the committee's full support to ensure Integrated Education is given the recognition it merits within the Education Bill. We welcome any future opportunities to continue this discussion. If we can provide any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Tristen Kelso, our Public Affairs Manager by email on Tristen@ief.org.uk or by phone on 028 9033 0031.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marie Cowan', written in a cursive style.

Marie Cowan
Chair, Integrated Education Fund