

Submission from NUS-USI to the Committee for Education's Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education

Opening comments

NUS-USI wishes to express gratitude for the opportunity to be able to provide this submission to this Inquiry. We believe that the subject of addressing division in the education system in Northern Ireland is a vitally important issue. NUS-USI does not wish to be considered to provide oral evidence to the Committee on this Inquiry and our submission covers our key thoughts on this matter.

Integrated Education

NUS-USI believes that children in Northern Ireland should ideally be educated together within an Integrated Education system. Why should division in our education system be allowed to exist?

NUS-USI believes that if government is aiming to create Shared Education campuses, why can it not simply instead make these Integrated Education campuses?

While Shared Education might be a step along the road to Integrated Education, as much progress as possible should be made, and Integrated Education should be the key priority.

NUS-USI believes that government must demonstrate the utmost ambition possible around tackling societal division in Northern Ireland.

If societal division is addressed and an integrated approach to the provision of public services is applied, this could address many very significant problems and could help build a shared future.

Delivering a shared future

The cost of segregation in Northern Ireland can potentially have a very significant impact upon public finances. NUS-USI believes that government should work to address the cost of division as a key priority, to help build a shared future.

Government should make delivering more Integrated Education places one of their top priorities and we believe that the government should publicly support Integrated Education ahead of Shared Education.

NUS-USI thinks that Integrated Education could potentially be the most important aspect of building a shared future. Building a shared future could cement peace and stability in Northern Ireland and could have an extremely positive impact on society. We also believe that tackling societal division could also help grow our economy and could help attract investment to Northern Ireland by potentially demonstrating that society here is moving forward together.

Integrated Education could also help in addressing societal division by potentially building the good relations landscape which could help facilitate the removal of peace walls in interface areas. If children are educated together it could change their whole perspective on life, and could help them understand and celebrate diversity at an early stage.

NUS-USI would strongly encourage the Committee to support Integrated Education over Shared Education.