

INTO Shared Education Response

INTO believe that the drive to link shared Education with academic performance is contradictory.

Teachers understand that the real value of education extends far beyond narrow measures of literacy and numeracy assessments and as such feel that the requirement that schools link shared education to formal assessment levels diminishes the spirit of the shared education ideal. INTO contends that the shared experiences of children are difficult to measure. A more suitable method, we believe, to assess the impact of such a strategy, is through a dashboard of measures. Much of the value added would be accrued outside of the classroom.

As a society emerging from conflict, we continue to have segregated communities and in seeking to address this the focus of shared education should be firmly upon improving understanding respect and empathy for others. Schools already prioritise academic performance as a core part of their curricular work.

INTO recognise that society has traditionally struggled to equip our pupils with the basic understanding and skills that are essential to help the next generation move beyond our post conflict society.

Community relations projects over the years have not always lived up to their potential, short-term funding, the imposition of generic priorities and political instability have all negated their effectiveness. Best practice would indicate that locally developed processes and solutions have the most impact. INTO would agree that shared education is needed. However, we feel that the purposeful linking of the award of shared education money to a regime which is focussed on the academic assessment alone, at a time when teachers have raised serious concerns about this

regime, is unhelpful and places teachers and principals, cognisant of the potential positive impact that the monies from shared education has in these areas of social deprivation, in an invidious position.

Mark McTaggart INTO Chair and Tommy McGlone INTO Trade Union Official will both be available to attend on Wednesday 25th to provide oral evidence.