

Peter McCallion
Clerk to the Committee for Education
Northern Ireland Assembly

19th November 2015

Dear McCallion

We welcome this opportunity to respond to the call for evidence in relation to the proposed Shared Education Act.

In relation to clause 1 of the proposed legislation, firstly we welcome the recognition of socio-economic disadvantage, however, we would wish to see the definition of shared education expanded to reflect more comprehensively the definition as recognised by the supportive shared education policy. We therefore seek the definition to also mean that where practicable shared education should include those disadvantaged by virtue of their section 75 grouping(s) and also to incorporate the cross sectorial working, most notably between those in and outside of the special education sector.

The accompanying memorandum to the Bill acknowledges that there are additional financial implications to schools working in partnership to achieve shared education. It recognizes that provision has been made for funding to support the implementation of shared education up to June 2018 and the Minister has committed to mainstream funding in the longer term. In assessing whether a school has met the requisite terms and conditions to be eligible for shared education funding we would assert that such requirements should not be dependent on the ability for schools to be monitored on key stage pupil data using the levels of progression.

Schools and their boards of governors must be consulted upon appropriate monitoring outcomes linked to the fulfilment of objectives contained with the accompanying policy. NAHT believe shared education is important the future of Northern Ireland, its advancement should not be stalled due to on and going industrial action by some unions.

Yours sincerely,

Helena Macormac
Policy Director
NAHT(NI)