SUBMISSION FROM DUNGANNON INTEGRATED COLLEGE

AT/AS/IA

17 January 2013

Dear Minister

Re: Education Bill to establish ESA

On behalf of the Board of Governors of Integrated College Dungannon, I wish to bring to your attention the following grave 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.

Integrated College Dungannon requests that the Education Bill be amended to address this statutory obligation to encourage and facilitate integrated education in the bill.

There is no representation for integrated education on the Board of ESA, as constituted at the moment, the Board reflects 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 from the integrated movement on the Board.

Integrated College Dungannon has a pupil enrolment of 527; we serve 427 families. We are oversubscribed in several year groups and are required to operate a waiting list policy. Since our foundation in 1995 we have educated 1868 children. In addition, we have a staff of 72.

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.

Integrated College Dungannon requests representation for the integrated sector, as of right, on the board of ESA.

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.

Integrated College Dungannon **requests 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.

Integrated College Dungannon believes there should be a duty on ESA to maximize opportunities for integrating/integrated education within a system of sustainable schools

Integrated College Dungannon 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. Integrated College Dungannon registers their support of these amendments.

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
Ann Tate
Chairperson
Board of Governors
Integrated College Dungannon

Cc:　　John O'Dowd, Minister for Education
　　　　Mervyn Storey, Chair of the Education Committee
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