



**INTO RESPONSE
TO THE
REVIEW OF
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

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Irish National Teachers' Organisation
23 College Gardens, Belfast, BT9 6BS
Tel: 028 90 381455
Email: info@into.ie

INTO Response to the Review of Public Administration

INTRODUCTION

INTO supports the common summary of points from the first consultation as outlined in para 2.2 with particular regard to:

- The need for change being very evident in educational administration;
- The necessity to maintain the existing quality of service developed and maintained by the five Education and Library Boards;
- Democratic accountability of education administration;
- The two-tier model of public administration.

With respect to local government INTO favours the Seven Council Model as enhanced by the proposed "civic councils" to promote local involvement and identity.

INTO favours the principle of coterminosity with service providers as outlined in para 1.1. of the Consultation Document.

INTO strongly favours the vision of education being that of "... a shared future built on mutual respect and collaboration" as outlined in para 6.34 of the Consultation Document and recommends that Government must make concrete recommendations to bring this inclusive vision of education to a reality.

INTO RESPONSE TO THE EDUCATION SECTION OF THE REVIEW

INTO proposes that the five Education and Library Boards, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, NI Council for Integrated Education and Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta should be merged into one single educational administrative body.

- (i) Thus the proposed Education Support Body and the Curriculum and Teacher Support Body should, in fact, be merged into a Single Education Entity (SEE). This is more in line with the summary of responses outlined in para 2.2 of the Consultation Document and, in particular, "... A widespread consensus on the need for fewer public bodies with more collaboration and less fragmentation."

To support this proposal, INTO contend that:

- A Single Education Entity (**SEE**) would best make progress towards the aims outlined on page 77 of the Consultation Document particularly ensuring equality of educational opportunity for all children and young people and providing seamless support to promote the education, health and wellbeing of young people, whether within or beyond the formal education setting.
 - The **SEE** would best be able promote the inter-related principles referred to in para 6.4 as the Foundations for Future Education Administration including, Coherence, Collaboration, Leadership, Responsibility and Accountability, Resources, Focus and Equality.
 - The **SEE** would facilitate and promote a Northern Ireland approach to pupil achievement.
 - The **SEE** would facilitate and promote a Northern Ireland approach to supporting school improvement.
 - The **SEE** would remove unnecessary duplication and fragmentation.
 - The **SEE** would ensure consistency of support available to all schools. Currently, Voluntary Grammar Schools and Integrated School teachers do not have access to full-time welfare service opportunities and redeployment in the event of school rationalisation.
 - The **SEE** would ensure a Northern Ireland approach to pupil underachievement.
 - The **SEE** would guarantee a more harmonious approach to the implementation of education reforms and movement to the Department's Entitlement Framework.
 - The **SEE** would enable the development of best practice with respect to educational policy and provision as in, for example, the Southern Education and Library Board Peripatetic and Home Tuition Services and the South Eastern Education and Library Board arrangements for school rationalisation. It should also promote equality of opportunity in that, for example, the existing practice of the five Education and Library Boards operating five distinct Special Educational Needs policies for pupils would be replaced by a single Northern Ireland wide policy and strategy.
- (ii) Critical to this development is the bringing together in the one single educational administrative body of all the current direct support

services funded by Department of Education. This is most important with particular regard to the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS).

- (iii) The Regional Training Unit's direct linkage with Education and Library Boards should be through the proposed ESB to the Single Education Entity.
- (iv) The Single Education Entity requires sub-regional bodies/offices to maintain the delivery of high-quality and accessible services based on the principle of coterminosity. This would ensure the maintenance of current high-quality standards provided by Education and Library Boards and make best use of the available resource.
- (v) The proposed role of coterminous bodies at local level requires negotiation and meaningful consultation with all education partners to preserve issues of ethos but eliminate duplication and fragmentation as referred to in para. 6.22. The integration of entities such as CCMS, NICIE and CnaG into the proposed local education administrative bodies is a sensitive matter on which all the recognised teaching and non-teaching unions should be consulted.
- (vi) The Single Educational Entity requires democratic accountability and must not be a non-accountable QUANGO or Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) and democracy must prevail at sub-regional body level. INTO suggests the Assembly Education Committee as being one form of democratic accountability for the new SEE.
- (vii) The role of the Department of Education being the responsible body for the development and implementation of education policy and strategy is recognised by INTO. There is currently serious fragmentation of Departmental policy-making. INTO suggests that this fragmentation be addressed by the merger of the Departments of Education (DE), Department of Education and Learning (DEL) and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Industry (DETI).
- (viii) INTO opposes the transfer of the Department of Education Salaries' and Pensions' Branch from Waterside House, Derry, out of the civil service to either the proposed ESB or Single Education Entity. INTO commends the qualitative work undertaken by DE staff in Derry and calls for this unit to be provided with modern, fit for purpose IT hardware. INTO has serious concerns from an equality as well as an efficiency perspective regarding the proposed removal of part of the Civil Service Department from Derry. Instead INTO calls for the maintenance of the existing professional facility whereby teachers'

salaries and pensions are administrated by the existing arrangement from Waterside House Derry and urges Government to ensure greater decentralisation of more civil service departments and jobs from the Greater Belfast conurbation to other parts of Northern Ireland, particularly the North West.

- (ix) INTO opposes the proposed break up of the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) so soon after it has been created by the merger of NI Curriculum Council and NI Schools Examination and Assessment Committee. There is a case for CCEA to maintain its strategic professional advisory function to maintain itself as a partner education body. Alternatively, it could move to the Single Education Entity as a free-standing body within it.
- (x) Youth Service provision should remain the responsibility of the Department of Education with the administration of the service being undertaken by the Single Education Entity with local services being provided by the seven sub-regional, coterminous bodies.
- (xi) INTO proposes the abolition of the failed policy of local schools' delegation/Boards of Governors and the introduction of the Delegated Schools' Management (DSM) based on the Scottish model of educational administration.
- (xii) INTO also proposes the abolition of Local Management of Schools in Northern Ireland. This is in line with the recommendations of the five Education and Library Boards and the five recognised teachers' unions. INTO also calls for the removal of teacher salaries' from individual school budgets.
- (xiii) RPA needs to take account of recent educational policy changes including post-primary review (PPR), SENDO (NI) from 1 September to ensure the individual needs of the pupil/student remain centrally in focus.
- (xiv) INTO recommends the return of Further and Higher Education Colleges to the Single Education Entity to facilitate post primary review and a better "fit for purpose" to the principles of the review of public administration.
- (xv) It is disappointing that no "SHARED FUTURE/Good Relations" recommendations are outlined in the review. This is in spite of the references to young people "...learning within a culture where segregation has been the norm for many..." and "...the vision for

education is of a shared future built on mutual respect and collaboration" as outlined in para 6.34 of the review.

INTO welcomes the development that the Catholic Church and CCMS in some local areas are prepared to share "Joint Management" primary schools with other Faith Communities.

INTO proposes that all school rationalisation post-primary review must have a duty to promote and take account of Government policy for "A Shared Future", the promotion of good community relations, mutual respect and meaningful collaboration.

INTO also proposes that all State Controlled Schools should change to Controlled Integrated Schools under genuine "Joint Management".

- (xvi) Every effort must be taken to ensure that the rights and concerns of existing staff across the education sector are considered. All staff must be afforded genuine equality of opportunity and all staff must be guaranteed protection under the TUPE legislation.

Frank Bunting
Northern Secretary
Irish National Teachers' Organisation