

# School Workforce Review

## Terms of reference

### INTO Response

#### **Purpose**

It is extraordinary that a Ministerial announcement to the Northern Ireland Assembly can be made in September 2007 about teachers' and support staffs' recruitment, qualifications, management, pay structures, professional development and career structure without any prior meaningful or other consultation with trades' unions of either the teachers or the support staff.

It is likewise extraordinary that a strategic review of teachers' and support staffs' respective roles and responsibilities should be initiated immediately after the publication of the Department of Education Independent Inquiry into teachers' salaries and conditions of service- the the recommendations of which have yet to be implemented.

It is also extraordinary that these terms of reference for this Ministerial Review took 6 months to be prepared and circulated.

#### **Background**

Reference to recent societal change in education is simply not true. The only significant change has been the failure of the Department of Education to implement the recommendations of its own Curran Inquiry after they were unanimously agreed by Management \side [incorporating all employing authorities and the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council [representing all recognised teachers' unions .INTO refers the Department to its own School Improvement Programme, published in 1998 which contains a more accurate picture and appraisal of the challenges facing Northern Ireland school communities.

INTO seeks immediate access to the workforce consultancy report commissioned by the Department of Education.

INTO also seeks information and consultation on proposed DE additional cuts to teacher intakes in Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutes [HEIs].

## **Scope of the Review**

INTO repeats its concern at the odd antecedents to this Review.

INTO notes some of the issues to be covered by the Review are matters for the Teachers' negotiating Committee [TNC] which the Review state is outside the scope of the Review.

## **Approach**

INTO seeks clarification as to the membership of the proposed Review Team, whether it will have teacher union representation, and what budget has been set aside for the undertaking of this Review.

INTO opposes direct consultation proposed with focus groups of staff as being undermining of the role of recognised teachers' unions. This is a new and unwelcome development in collective bargaining in education which will undermine existing relationships.

## **Consultation**

INTO notes these arrangements.

Frank Bunting

March 2008.