

GOVERNING BODIES ASSOCIATION (NI) LTD

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Response to Order

Please use the statements in the response booklet to follow these notes

Please note page nos. here are as in booklet

Part 11 The Curriculum

Page 9-12 Articles 3 to 13 (requirements on BoGs re curriculum and assessment)

- A. There is a need for an agreed balanced curriculum Framework, but the coercive method has failed in the past and will fail in the future.
- B. They are over-prescriptive and are based on a very particular idea of a good curriculum.
They are against the spirit of the GB white paper
They will restrict NI pupils' ability to take GB GCSE and A Levels and so may restrict their aspirations to go to universities in GB.
DE will be the sole arbiter of decisions. Surely this is undemocratic and will place enormous powers within the D E and allow the Dept to follow any direction set by a Minister.
There is a grave danger that the Dept assent will be the only assent. This is a major concern for some schools.
DE has conceded rights over curriculum to CCEA. It is totally unacceptable for such a body to be given the power to dictate the curriculum of state schools
The emphasis on skills must not take precedence over a specific and sufficient knowledge content in syllabuses for all subjects. (White Paper for England and Wales recommends enhancement of curriculum content for English and Maths.)
- C. DE should not be given powers to specify areas as yet not defined
There needs to be democratic control
Parents trust and can relate to Governors and Principals so why is authority not based there?,
Re. Assessment.. Within assessments, for these to serve any useful purpose, there must be values given for knowledge and understanding.

Page 11 and 12 Articles 14 to 17 Special cases (re-enactment of 1989 order re. when the statutory curriculum can be modified or disapplied).

- A. Yes

When applied, have worked to advantage.

Page 13-14 Articles 18 to 22 (Access courses for older pupils; entitlement framework)

A. That BoGs have a process of engagement, a template for arrangements with other schools and FE colleges.
It is desirable in all cases that students have access to as many suitable courses as can reasonably be offered. It is more important, however that these are of high quality and well delivered than that there be a great number of courses taught badly.

B. No evidence has been offered for the general/ applied division
The list of applied subjects will disadvantage NI students
Too much power is placed in the hands of the minister
There is no trust in school Governors
It is undesirable, particularly at the outset, to have specified ratios of general and applied subjects. It would be better if both numbers of subjects and ratios were expressed as targets and thus give schools the opportunity to develop over time.

Subject quotas should not be set by the DE. Schools are the bodies, in consultation with parents, which are best placed to judge pupils' needs.

C. The number of courses and the ratio should be an aspiration and suited to individual schools and circumstances.
The power to change should not reside with the DE. This is undemocratic.
We have grave concerns that this is an unacceptable bureaucratic process of decision making.
It must be open to scrutiny and to the influence of Governors
The one third / two thirds values should not be specified.

Page 15-16 Article 23 (re curriculum advice and support)

B. CASS has not been helpful. At £40,000,000 / annum, i.e. almost £2,000 per teacher, the process has become expensive, bureaucratic and unnecessary. The GB model of schools deciding their own curriculum is much more attractive.

C. This should be made a responsibility of the Boards of Governors of Schools with budgets paid directly to schools who can then purchase training from the most appropriate source as necessary.

Page 17-18 Article 24 (make information available whilst protecting privacy)

A. Support this because it may be necessary in certain circumstances to do so.

Page 19-20 Article 25 (Enables curriculum appeals tribunals to consider complaints BoGs in carrying out functions under 18 to 22)

- A. Do not support this
- B. This is a pointless exercise when the DE is enforcing its rights to decide the curriculum; it is unnecessary and will be expensive.
Effective and efficient management dictates that issues should be sorted out at school level.
- C. Delete this article from order

Page 21-22 Articles 26 (re list of provisions not applicable to Nursery, Primary, Hospital Schools)

- A. Fine, reduces bureaucracy

Part 111 Admissions

Page 23 Articles 27-29 (Criteria which may or may not be used to be specified etc.)

- A. That all schools may select their own admission criteria from a set menu. This allows a parity of esteem for all schools.
- B. Absolutely object to the DE acquiring power to set the menu, to set the criteria and to set the order of criteria.
DE has not shown itself willing to listen to consultation.
Strongly object to the failure to note the political and public view that academic selection *in some form* be retained.
Articles will fail to ensure that as far as possible there is a good fit between pupils' abilities, aptitudes, interests, his/ her ability to learn and the provision made by the school.
The government is committed to different high status post primary pathways, it is therefore even more important that pupils are appropriately placed within these.
It will prove impossible over time to maintain the variety of types of school and the standard of education delivered within them without somehow matching pupils' ability to the type of education being offered.
- C. This part of the order is undemocratic. It will damage relationships between schools and their local communities. It will produce centrally determined directions of education.
Rethink. This should not be put through by Order in Council without the possibility of debate and amendment.
Pupils' aptitude for specific types of learning and their various intelligences should be criteria for consideration by the receiving school.

Page 25-26 Articles 30 to 33 (re Suspensions and expulsions)

- A. Broadly agree. There can be advantages in a DFES type of scheme wherein a clear set of rules are laid down.

- B. Schools understand their own circumstances best. Therefore, within regulations, the power to suspend and expel must be allowed to remain with School Principals and Governors. The removal of this responsibility will lead to destruction of discipline in schools and be severely detrimental to the pursuit of teaching and learning.
- C. This part of the order appears to deny the real possibility of a Board of Governors acting for the benefit of the whole school including the pupil to be suspended or expelled.
 This was not consulted upon.
 It is a centralising growth in bureaucratic power.
 It is the outcome of the workings of very low level ELB officers.
 It completely contradicts the ideas of power to the lowest level of management
 It will have major legal / industrial relations ramifications
 It needs to be withdrawn and consulted upon.

Page 27-28 Articles 34-36 (re the General Teaching Council)

- A. The teaching profession needs to have an agreed professional body. However at a time of teacher unemployment, it is strange that unqualified teachers are being employed.
 A regulatory body is needed to maintain the high standards of qualification for teaching professionals and thereby maintain the standard of teaching provided within schools.
- B. Any reduction in the level of academic qualification and teacher training would be unacceptable.
- C. Article should also state that the GTC would strive to maintain and enhance levels of teacher qualifications.

Page 29-30 Articles 37 and 38 (re payment of FE governors)

- A. This is not necessary.
- B. There is a long-standing tradition of voluntary service within the whole community which can be relied upon. Payment goes against the spirit of this tradition and is therefore retrograde and detrimental.
 The FE model can be copied from the Voluntary Sector where high quality governance is freely given.
- C. Remove any reference to funding

Page 33-34 Article 40 (re Annual parents' meetings)

- A. Entirely support this Article. Like many well-intentioned innovations these meetings served no useful purpose.

Page 35-36

Article 41 C. Need to include some reference to teaching qualifications of DARD staff
Page 37

Article 42 C. Need to clarify funding issues for this.

