

NAHT

National Association of Head Teachers Northern Ireland

SECONDARY SECTOR COMMITTEE

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02 March 2006

Post Primary Support Team
(Consultation on Proposals)
Room 6.02
Department of Education
43 Rathgael Road
Bangor
BT19 7PR

Dear Sir/Madam

Consultation on Proposal for Draft Education (NI) Order Review of Pupil Suspension and Expulsion Procedures: New Arrangements

The Secondary Sector of NAHT (NI) are dismayed with aspects of what they read in the letter of 6/12/05 and what is outlined in paragraph 30 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.

The NAHT (NI) Secondary Sector Committee feel that the compliment of the working committee who deliberated on the proposed new amended arrangements were totally unrepresentative of both serving teachers and principals.

Furthermore, during previous consultation it would appear that comments, suggestions and recommendations made by serving principals have been ignored or disregarded.

If the department's aim is true consultation and partnership then the wealth of practical local experience residing with principals should be given some recognition and consideration. Unfortunately this has not been the case in the recent past.

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At present the NAHT Secondary Committee feel ignored and our opinions and experience deemed worthless. As secondary principals we are daily concerned with endeavouring to improve the behaviour of children and young people in schools.

We have grave concerns regarding the administration and management of intended proposals.

Aspects of both the 2006 Order and the letter of 6/12/05 seem greatly at odds with the Prime Minister Mr Tony Blair's "Respect Agenda" as outlined for the United Kingdom. As a result of how NAHT principal members feel, we are not prepared to put more valuable time into a further consultation process. Especially as we have seen that previous responses we have made have neither been recorded nor any apparent credence given to the comments, recommendations and advice made.

There are other aspects of the proposal for a draft Education (NI) Order that we could and would wish to make comments on. However, again we question would the time input be worthwhile when previous experience shows our opinions appear to be both valueless and ignored. What a sad indictment of the present supposed consultation processes.

This letter constitutes our response.

Some members will reply individually from their schools. Some members are also part of the Association of Head Teachers in Secondary Schools (NI) (AHTSS). A formal response will be made from this group which is comprised of NAHT (NI) Executive Committee members, UK National Committee members and NI Secondary Sector Committee members.

We hope – and we trust not in vain – that some attention and recognition will be given to our comments based on what in reality is a wealth of practical experience.

Northern Ireland education is at a significant watershed, change is inevitable, and essential in order to help deliver a society for the 21st century. **We strongly believe that if the Department of Education for Northern Ireland are really serious about progressing change, and if this change is to be successful in its implementation, then the perspective, knowledge, frontline administrative skills and good will of Secondary Sector principals is essential if not crucial.**

We sincerely hope that the Department of Education and its senior officials recognise this reality and soon for the good of the pupils presently in our care and those who are soon to follow.

Yours faithfully



ILG Arbutnot
Secretary to NAHT (NI)