

YOUR REF



The Leading Public Service Union

John Corey General Secretary

OUR REF A03-04-08

Post Primary Support Team
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07 March 2006

Dear Sir

DRAFT EDUCATION (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER

Introduction

1. NIPSA wishes to register its support for the provisions in the above draft Order that facilitate the removal of academic selection for entry to post primary schools in Northern Ireland.
2. NIPSA is the largest trade union in Northern Ireland with over 43,000 members employed in public services including the NI Civil Service, NI Housing Executive, District Councils, Health and Personal Social Services and the Education and Library Boards. In the case of the latter NIPSA represents over 7,000 employees including staff employed in schools.

NIPSA Policies

3. The organisation of post primary education in Northern Ireland and the use of the 11+ transfer test has been debated frequently at the union's Annual Delegate Conferences.
 - (a) NIPSA is opposed to the use of academic selection for movement of pupils from primary to post primary schools.
 - (b) NIPSA is strongly opposed to the continuation of the 11+ transfer test.
 - (c) NIPSA supports the replacement of the existing separate grammar and secondary schools system with a system of comprehensive schools for pupils aged 11-18.
 - (d) NIPSA strongly supports the development of integrated education.

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4. Consequently in so far as the above policies are reflected in the proposed provisions of the draft Order, NIPSA supports the enactment of this legislation.
5. NIPSA remains concerned that the vociferous opponents will succeed once again in persuading the Department of Education to delay and frustrate the essential reforms needed in education selection and equality of treatment of all pupils. NIPSA calls on Ministers to ensure that the changes in relation to selection are implemented.
6. NIPSA also remains dissatisfied that steps are not being taken to implement a fully comprehensive post primary school system. NIPSA calls on the Department to give further consideration to this aspect.

Education Funding

7. Finally NIPSA is deeply concerned that the successful implementation of changes will be frustrated and damaged by a failure to provide necessary levels of funding. Given the severe financial cuts already damaging the provision of education services for children, the allocation of an additional £24.7m will not be adequate to meet resource needs for the proposed changes. NIPSA calls for critical review of the additional costs required and for requisite funding to be provided.

Yours faithfully

John Corey

JOHN COREY
General Secretary

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