



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS  
MÄNNYSTRÍE O LEAR

# **REVIEW OF POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION**

**Report on  
Responses to Consultation**

**October 2002**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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## Foreword by the Minister for Education



In October 2001, as part of the Review of Post-Primary Education, I launched an extended period of consultation on the recommendations made by the Post-Primary Review Body (the Burns Report).

This has been the largest consultation ever undertaken on an education issue and I have been very encouraged by the level of response from our education partners, schools, the public and young people. I would like to thank all those who took the time to consider the issues and submit their views. Many organisations consulted widely with their own members and this is reflected in the depth and quality of their submissions.

I recognise that this is a very challenging issue for us all, and I have been greatly impressed by the willingness of people to engage in constructive discussion and by the quality of public debate on the issues.

Throughout the consultation period, I have stressed my commitment to an open and transparent consultation. This Report sets out the responses to the different strands of the consultation for everyone to see and consider. There are strong signs of an emerging consensus in the submissions made. The challenge for us all is to build on this consensus to develop new post-primary arrangements which meet the needs of all our children.

**MARTIN McGUINNESS MP MLA**  
Minister for Education

# SUMMARY

## BACKGROUND

1. Following the publication of research into “The Effects of the Selective System of Education in Northern Ireland” by Professor Tony Gallagher and Professor Alan Smith in September 2000, the Minister for Education, Martin McGuinness MP MLA, established a Review Body with a broad remit to consult widely and bring forward recommendations for future post-primary arrangements. The Review Body was chaired by Mr Gerry Burns and comprised 10 members with backgrounds in schools, further and higher education, business and training.
2. The Review Body’s Report (the Burns Report) in October 2001 recommended:
  - ◆ 12 principles that should underpin the education system;
  - ◆ the abolition of the Eleven-Plus Transfer Tests;
  - ◆ the ending of selection on academic grounds;
  - ◆ the development of a ‘Pupil Profile’ that would inform the individual learning needs of each pupil;
  - ◆ common admissions criteria for post-primary schools; and
  - ◆ the creation of a ‘Collegiate System’ of schools across Northern Ireland.
3. The Department of Education published the Burns Report for consultation until 28 June 2002 and invited:
  - ◆ comments on the proposals in the Burns Report;
  - ◆ suggestions for any modifications to the Burns proposals; and
  - ◆ suggestions for any alternative arrangements.

## CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4. In the largest ever consultation on an education issue, the Department adopted a multi-stranded approach to ensure that

all sections of the community had an opportunity to express their views:

- ◆ the Minister held 28 meetings between February and June 2002 with key interests, to listen to their views on the Burns proposals and their suggestions for future post-primary arrangements;
- ◆ over 1,300 written submissions were received by the Department;
- ◆ a Detailed Response Booklet, along with a video and a consultation pack, was issued to schools, Institutes of Further and Higher Education, a range of Community Groups and Training Organisations. Over 500 schools (40%) replied, the highest response ever to a consultation exercise by the Department;
- ◆ in an unprecedented exercise, Household Response Forms were issued to each household and over 200,000 people, 16% of the adult population, responded. Many also included additional comments. In addition, the views of a representative sample of over 2,000 households were obtained; and
- ◆ the views of young people aged 14-19 years were obtained through a series of focus group meetings, complementing independent research into the views of primary school children on the Burns proposals.

## GENERAL OVERVIEW

5. The opportunity to contribute to the debate on new post-primary arrangements was widely welcomed. Many respondents also expressed appreciation of the widespread consultation carried out by the Review Body and there was a general recognition of the important contribution made by its report as a catalyst for public debate on post-primary arrangements.
6. There was widespread acceptance of the need for change and support for new post-primary arrangements that will give all children access to a modern and diverse curriculum which meets their needs and raises their levels of attainment.
7. There was little support for the Review Body's model in its entirety but varying degrees of support were expressed for individual recommendations. There was strong consensus on a number of the Burns proposals including the Guiding Principles,

the abolition of the Transfer Tests, the development of a Pupil Profile (although views differed on what it should contain and how it should be used) and the need for greater co-operation and collaboration between schools. The predominant view was that academic selection should be ended, although some support for this proposal was subject to certain conditions being met. Most of those closely involved in education – the Education Partners<sup>1</sup>, primary and secondary schools and the Churches – supported the ending of academic selection but there was also substantial opposition to this proposal, particularly from the grammar school sector and a majority<sup>2</sup> of those responding to the Household Response Form. There was little support for 2 of the proposed admissions criteria (proximity to the pupil's home and children of staff at the school) or for Collegiates as proposed in the Burns Report.

## PROPOSAL FOR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

8. There was almost universal support for the Vision and Guiding Principles set out by the Review Body, particularly the key principles that:
  - ◆ each young person should be valued equally; and
  - ◆ all young people should be enabled to develop their talents to the full.
9. Human rights and equality interests stressed that the rights of the child, as defined within the international human rights framework should be more explicit in the Guiding Principles to reinforce the links between education and all other human rights.

## PROPOSAL TO ABOLISH THE TRANSFER TESTS

10. Almost all responses to the consultation supported the abolition of the Transfer Tests. It was argued that the Transfer Tests were unfair and not appropriate to the current and future educational needs of learners. All the Education Partners supported the abolition of the Tests, as did almost all schools (including a majority of grammar schools), the Churches, business interests, the voluntary/community sector, young people, all the main

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<sup>1</sup> A definition of the groupings used is provided at the end of the summary.

<sup>2</sup> A definition of the quantitative terms used is provided at the end of the summary.

political parties and Human Rights/Equality Interests. A majority of those responding to the Household Response Form also supported abolition of the Transfer Tests, although around a third were opposed.

11. A number of respondents commented that the Transfer Tests should not be abolished until an alternative means of academic selection had been developed – these included a majority of grammar schools, the Secondary Heads Association Northern Ireland (SHANI) representing mainly Principals and senior staff in controlled grammar schools, the Institute of Directors (IoD), the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), rural interests, several voluntary organisations, and a minority of young people and respondents to the Household Response Form.

### **PROPOSAL TO END ACADEMIC SELECTION**

12. There was support for the Burns proposal to end academic selection at age 11 from all 5 Education and Library Boards, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG – Council for Irish-medium Education), two thirds of schools, the 5 main Teachers' Unions, 30% of those responding to the Household Response Form, the Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC), the Institutes of Further and Higher Education that responded, the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), Sinn Féin, the Alliance Party, the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP), the Women's Coalition, the Workers' Party, a majority of the voluntary and community interests that responded, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC), the Children's Law Centre, the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ), the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NIC.ICTU), the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA) and the Campaign Against Selection (CAS).
13. The Northern Catholic Bishops considered that when, through curricular reform and enhanced collaboration between schools, curricular pathways are in place in each area and the agreed Pupil Profiles are available then the position will have been reached when all forms of academic selection should end, in favour of informed parental election.

14. The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) supported the ending of academic selection on the condition that quality options were available to all pupils to enable their needs to be matched to the most appropriate provision. The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) felt that the need for academic selection would disappear as curricular changes were introduced and the Catholic Heads Association (CHA), representing Principals of Catholic-managed grammar schools, considered that when the curriculum had been reshaped to offer diverse pathways, and the Pupil Profile had been developed, academic selection may become unnecessary.
15. Opposition to the ending of academic selection was expressed by the Governing Bodies Association of voluntary grammar schools (GBA) and SHANI, one third of schools, a majority of the 16 Training Organisations which responded, IoD, UUP, DUP, 4 District Councils that responded and rural interest groups. Almost two thirds of those responding to the Household Response Form also opposed the ending of academic selection.
16. Primary and post-primary pupils were equally divided for and against academic selection. The Equality Commission agreed that the current system of transfer should be discontinued but expressed no view on the ending of academic selection.

## **ARGUMENTS ADVANCED IN SUPPORT OF ENDING ACADEMIC SELECTION**

17. Those in favour of ending academic selection advanced a range of arguments in support of their position. Many acknowledged the achievements of the current system but argued that it was not adequate or acceptable for the future. They saw current arrangements as leading to a skewing of the primary curriculum, having a detrimental and stressful impact on children, damaging to self-esteem, and creating more losers than winners. They argued that the present arrangements perpetuated social and class divisions and militated against equality of opportunity, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. They considered that the current system was inflexible and did not recognise that children developed at different rates and had a wide range of talents, aptitudes and learning abilities.
18. There was a widespread view among the main Education Partners that the prime focus should be on the needs of the child as a learner and that the education system must cater for the needs of all children. They stated that society and the economy

in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century require a much broader range of knowledge and skills and new post-primary arrangements must offer a wide choice of curricular options, promote parity of esteem for all curricular choices and pathways, and provide flexibility between them.

## **SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVES TO ACADEMIC SELECTION**

19. Alternative arrangements for transfer to post-primary education suggested included:
  - ◆ a system of informed election; and
  - ◆ all ability comprehensive schools.

### **Informed Election**

20. Informed election was described as a process in which parents, and/or pupils, consider information and advice about the pupil and the range of educational opportunities and courses available, and choose (elect) which courses or institutions to apply to for admission.
21. Four Education and Library Boards (BELB, NEELB, SEELB, SELB) together with CCMS, CCEA, CHA, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), the Ulster Teachers' Union (UTU), a few Institutes of Further and Higher Education, TRC, CBI, SDLP and the Alliance Party proposed moving to a process of informed election to appropriate courses at age 14. WELB suggested informed election at age 11.
22. The Northern Catholic Bishops made clear their belief that educational pathways should be chosen on the basis of informed parental election, rather than selection by schools.
23. There were differences in detail between the models of informed election proposed (see Chapter 4). In general, it was envisaged that pupils would transfer at age 11 to post-primary schools using non-academic criteria (which would include parental preference informed by the Pupil Profile) and follow a common curriculum to age 14. Decisions about future curriculum choices or pathways would be made at age 14 by pupils and their parents on the basis of information in the Pupil Profile and advice from post-primary schools. At this later age, it was felt that young people would have a clearer idea of their strengths and preferences and sufficient maturity to take greater responsibility for their choice of future education.

24. There was a strong view from responses to the consultation that the full range of curricular choices should be available to pupils. The curricular options or educational pathway chosen by pupils might be delivered entirely within individual schools or through co-operation with another school or schools. Various arrangements were proposed by the Boards, CCMS, CCEA and the Churches to ensure that pupils had a wide choice of curricula open to them. These included large institutions capable of providing the necessary breadth of curricular choice; collaborative networks, consortia or confederations of schools in a local area; 11-14 schools feeding specialist post-14 academies; 11-16 schools feeding 6<sup>th</sup> form provision; and a campus approach of several schools under a single management within which smaller schools may function as 11-14 schools feeding into Key Stage 4 and 6<sup>th</sup> form provision, or 11-16 schools feeding into 6<sup>th</sup> form provision. There was strong support from a wide spectrum of respondents for a flexible approach that allowed for a range of solutions reflecting local needs and circumstances.

### **Suggested Arrangements for Moving to Informed Election**

25. The process of change from academic selection to informed election was recognised as problematic and a number of suggestions were made for transitional arrangements.
26. The link with the Curriculum Review was emphasised by many respondents and BELB suggested that academic selection could be ended and change introduced gradually in parallel with curriculum change. New arrangements could be implemented in Year 8 and phased through with that cohort of pupils.
27. Three Boards suggested a phased process of change whereby a reducing proportion of pupils would be admitted to post-primary schools at age 11 on the basis of academic selection, with the remainder admitted on non-academic criteria. (BELB suggested that in this period all schools should be allowed to select a reducing proportion of pupils on academic criteria.) BELB and SELB proposed the phasing out of academic selection over 3 years and NEELB over 5 years. SELB proposed the continuation of the current Transfer Tests during transition while BELB advocated new standardised tests compiled by the educational psychologists in the Boards and NEELB considered that CCEA should devise new tests.

28. CCEA proposed a transition from academic selection to informed election over 5-7 years with admission to over-subscribed grammar schools continuing to be made on an educational basis. The Transfer Tests would continue during this period but as curricular changes are introduced, the need for them would diminish to become the exception rather than the rule.

### **All Ability Comprehensive Schools**

29. NICIE, CnaG, the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT), the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT), the Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO), the Association of Head Teachers in Secondary Schools (AHTSS), Sinn Féin, PUP, the Women's Coalition, the Workers' Party, NIPSA, CAS and Education Reform 21 favoured all ability or comprehensive education.
30. NICIE and CnaG favoured all ability schools, which already operate within the integrated and Irish-medium sectors. It was argued that these are testament to the fact that selection on academic grounds is both unnecessary and avoidable, and should have no place in a modern society which declares itself to be committed to the continuous improvement of educational opportunities for all its young people.
31. Sinn Féin proposed all ability neighbourhood comprehensive schools from age 11 operating on the basis of catchment areas, subject to a common curriculum and with increased funding targeted on social need. The PUP favoured secular comprehensive schools that provide education of equal quality.
32. CAS and Education Reform 21 argued that a comprehensive system would provide full curricular provision for all types and levels of intelligence, would be flexible and could provide individual learning programmes, provide parity of esteem for different pathways, avoid premature decisions on pathways, and ensure equal opportunities for every child.

## **ARGUMENTS ADVANCED AGAINST THE ENDING OF ACADEMIC SELECTION**

33. Those not in favour of ending academic selection pointed to the high educational standards achieved under the current arrangements and argued that although the current Transfer Tests and the coaching associated with them were unsatisfactory, academic selection itself should be retained. They stated that selection is a fact of life and ending academic selection would create neighbourhood comprehensive schools which, they contended, had been discredited in England. The result would be an overall lowering of the high educational standards in schools.
34. They suggested that a “one size fits all” model would disable schools’ abilities to tailor education to the needs of individuals and would be to the serious detriment of the socially disadvantaged children who were supposed to benefit. They also argued that more able pupils suffered in mixed ability classes and there was no need to change the current system which matched children to schools. Efforts should be directed towards improving secondary schools and grammar schools should be left alone.
35. Respondents who did not support the ending of academic selection also pointed to other weaknesses in the education system including the failure to invest adequately in primary schools, the non-repeatable nature of the Tests and the rigidity of the current structures which did not provide children with a choice of curriculum.

## **SUGGESTED MODIFICATIONS TO ACADEMIC SELECTION**

36. Those against ending academic selection argued that there should be a greater diversity of provision available in schools so that parents and pupils have real choice. They stated that credible alternative pathways that include academic, technical and vocational courses should be created. Pathways must enjoy equal esteem and be sufficiently flexible to permit movement between them as children develop. The academic option should not be confined to grammar schools. Popular schools should be allowed to expand and more of the same type should be created.

37. There was a general view among those who favoured the retention of academic selection that pupils should be admitted to schools on the basis of educational criteria and strong support for the Pupil Profile to be seen by the receiving post-primary schools and used for admission purposes. There were also suggestions for a portfolio of information to be used, including externally set and moderated tests and information on skills, aptitudes and abilities. Others suggested the outcome of continuous assessment as a basis for selection.
38. A minority of responses from a range of sectors suggested delayed selection at 14, and referred to the Dickson Plan in the Craigavon area as a possible model.

### **PROPOSAL FOR A PUPIL PROFILE**

39. There was almost universal support for the development of a Pupil Profile. It was felt that this would give a more holistic picture of each child by providing a broad range of information on their attributes and achievements. The Pupil Profile was welcomed as a valuable instrument in providing better information for parents and informing the learner's choice of pathway, thus helping to ensure that each child was admitted to an appropriate school which met his/her needs. There was strong support for the Pupil Profile to be standardised across schools with systems in place to ensure consistency and moderation. It was generally felt that the Pupil Profile should contain both qualitative and quantitative information, including some form of standardised information on attainment in subjects. A few of the Education Partners wished the Pupil Profile to be developed throughout primary school and one Board suggested that it be extended into a Lifelong Learning Profile.
40. While all stakeholders supported the development of the Pupil Profile a range of concerns were expressed. These issues centred primarily on the potential for increased workload for teachers and additional pressure being placed on teachers by parents. ICT was seen as a means of helping to address the workload issue and it was suggested that the Pupil Profile should build on, or replace, the existing Record of Achievement and Key Stage Assessments. There were reservations also about the subjective nature of some of the information and whether teachers would be fair and objective in their assessments. Human rights and equality issues were raised with respect to whether parents from lower socio-economic

groups would be able to evaluate and use the information effectively in the Pupil Profile. It was also suggested that parents might ignore the Pupil Profile when making decisions.

41. Opinions differed most sharply over the use of the Pupil Profile for admissions purposes. Those supporting the end of academic selection argued that the Pupil Profile must not be used for admissions. Those not in favour of ending academic selection felt that receiving schools should have prior sight of the Pupil Profile and be able to use it for admissions purposes. A small number of Education Partners considered that, while the Pupil Profile should not be used for selection, all interested parties should have access to it in order to inform decisions on post-primary choices.

## PROPOSAL FOR STATUTORY ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

42. Views were divided on the proposal for statutory common admissions criteria for all post-primary schools, but a majority of all those responding were in favour. Support was highest among schools, although only a minority of grammar schools agreed. Those in favour considered that uniform criteria were more equitable and easier for parents to understand. Those not in favour argued that common criteria had no educational merit, would destroy the ethos of individual schools and would prevent schools from selecting pupils who best fit what the school has to offer.
43. **Order of parental preference** attracted widespread support as an admissions criterion from Education Partners and schools, although SHANI and a majority of grammar schools were opposed. Those against the use of this criterion expressed concern that parental preference would result in over-subscription of what are perceived to be the “best schools” and argued that it had been used before without success. Human rights and equality interests opposed this criterion on the grounds that it would advantage the better-informed and articulate parents from the higher socio-economic groups and that parental preference might not always be in the best interests of the child.
44. **Siblings/eldest child** attracted general support for practical reasons provided it also applied when the child was the eldest boy or girl where the older sibling was of a different sex. A majority of pupils were opposed on the basis that the school

attended by an older sibling may not be appropriate for a younger sibling. Human rights interests felt that the criterion could be discriminatory as long as all schools were not equal.

45. **Children of staff at the school** attracted support from a majority of schools but was opposed by a majority of most other groups on the grounds that it was discriminatory and contrary to the principle of valuing all children equally.
46. **Compelling individual circumstances** was widely supported as a flexible way of meeting the needs of individual children, provided there were clear guidelines and procedures to ensure that it was not open to abuse.
47. **Proximity to the pupil's home** attracted greatest comment, the majority negative because of concerns that it would disadvantage rural communities, lead to "selection by postcode" which would favour higher income families, limit choice and fail to match pupils' needs to schools.
48. The most commonly mentioned **alternative criterion** was a lottery system. The integrated sector argued for continued use of religion in order to maintain its religious balance and the Irish-medium sector argued for proficiency in the Irish language.

## PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH COLLEGIATES

49. While there was universal support for greater co-operation and collaboration among schools, there was widespread opposition to Collegiates as proposed in the Burns Report. Concerns focused on the perceived bureaucracy; additional costs which would divert resources from the classroom; the size and geographical spread of individual Collegiates; transport entitlement; the safety and supervision of pupils in transit; pastoral care and child protection issues; timetabling problems and the proposed statutory requirement to participate as a condition of grant aid. The tension between the role and responsibilities of Boards of Governors and Trustees and the proposed functions of Collegiates was also a major issue with Education Partners, schools and the Churches. Many respondents urged that special schools and the Further Education sector should be included in Collegiates or other collaborative arrangements.

50. There was wide acceptance of the advantages that co-operation and collaboration could bring through sharing of resources, expertise and good practice, and provision of a broader range of curriculum choices for pupils, particularly post-16. The predominant view among the Education Partners was that clusters of schools co-operating, or otherwise working in partnership, should grow from voluntary participation or existing arrangements in a way that suited local circumstances and needs.

## **SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVES TO COLLEGIATES**

51. A range of alternative arrangements to Collegiates was proposed. The 5 Boards suggested some form of local collaborative networks of schools, reflecting local needs and circumstances. BELB and NEELB felt that these networks might grow and develop over time into larger consortia or confederations of schools, with participation eventually becoming a condition of grant aid. All expressed a clear view that initial funding and support should be provided as an incentive for schools to participate. CCMS suggested that where schools were of insufficient size to offer curricular flexibility, a campus approach comprising a number of schools with a single structure for governance and management should be adopted in discrete geographical areas. CCEA advocated multi-site institutions or federal clusters of schools. Political parties proposed a range of collaborative arrangements similar to those of the Education Partners.

## **OTHER ISSUES**

### **Curriculum**

52. A common theme in submissions from education interests was that the Curriculum Review and the Post-Primary Review are inextricably linked and must be taken forward together. The curriculum was viewed as the driver that should influence the shape of post-primary arrangements.
53. A majority of written submissions from stakeholders argued that a broader range of curricular choices should be made available to all pupils to accommodate their different interests, pace of development, learning styles and educational needs. There should be parity of esteem for curricular choices and flexibility for young people to change courses or direction.

## Implementation

54. The timescale for change proposed by the Review Body was generally considered to be too optimistic. There was widespread support for a more gradual process of change in recognition of the need to allow time for all parts of the education system, including parents and pupils, to manage change successfully. There was concern that the education of pupils should not be jeopardised during the period of transition.
55. There was also a recognition that it was in everyone's interests to establish new arrangements within a reasonable timescale and requests for an early decision on when the process would start, in order to remove uncertainty about the Transfer Tests.
56. A number of Education Partners suggested that the main education interests should be brought together to discuss the best form of future arrangements to meet the needs of children and how they might best be implemented.

## Funding

57. There was a common view that changes to post-primary arrangements could not be effected without substantial additional funding. There would be costs associated with:
  - ◆ additional recurrent funding for primary schools to enable learning difficulties to be identified at an early stage and appropriate support to be provided;
  - ◆ the development and implementation of the Pupil Profile and the associated training of teachers;
  - ◆ capital investment to enhance premises and facilities in secondary schools;
  - ◆ additional funding to tackle social and educational disadvantage;
  - ◆ incentives to promote greater collaboration between schools; and
  - ◆ the implementation of the Curriculum Review.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

58. This Report on the responses to consultation provides a summary of the main points raised by the various sectors and interests - those seeking further details should consult the

Department's website at [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk) which contains full copies of the main submissions received along with additional statistical and background information. It should be noted that not everyone commented on every proposal and therefore some apparent gaps in coverage may reflect the fact that the organisation did not respond on that particular issue.

### Quantitative Terms

59. A number of quantitative terms are used in the Report. The terms correspond to percentages as follows:-

Almost/nearly all	-	More than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A substantial minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	Less than 10%

## Definition of Groups for Analysis of Consultation Responses

- (i) Education Partners**

ELBs, CCMS, NICIE, CnaG, CCEA, Teachers' Unions, GBA, CHA, SHANI, AHTSS
- (ii) Schools**
- (iii) Churches**

Northern Catholic Bishops, TRC, individual churches
- (iv) Higher/Further Education and Training**

Universities, Teacher Training Institutions, Institutes of Further and Higher Education, Training Organisations
- (v) Business/Industry**

IoD, CBI, employers
- (vi) Political Representatives**

Political Parties, Politicians, District Councils, Civic Forum
- (vii) Public and Voluntary/Community Sector**

General public, voluntary organisations, community organisations
- (viii) Young People**

Primary and post-primary pupils and young people to age 19
- (ix) Human Rights/Equality Interests**

NIHRC, Equality Commission, CAJ, Children's Law Centre
- (x) Others**

NIC.ICTU, NIPSA, Cadogan Group, CAS, Education Reform 21, any other organisations

# CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND TO REVIEW

- 1.1 In 1998, the former Minister for Education, Tony Worthington MP, commissioned research into the effects of the selective system of education. This research was carried out by a team led by Professor Tony Gallagher, Queen's University and Professor Alan Smith, University of Ulster. Their report entitled, 'The Effects of the Selective System of Secondary Education in Northern Ireland' was published in September 2000.
- 1.2 This research highlighted serious weaknesses in the current system and in response, the Minister for Education, Martin McGuinness MP MLA, established an independent Review Body to make recommendations on the most appropriate future arrangements for post-primary education. The Review Body was chaired by Mr Gerry Burns and comprised members with backgrounds in schools, further and higher education, business and training.
- 1.3 The Review Body's Report (the Burns Report) recommended:
  - ◆ 12 principles that should underpin the education system, including that each young person should be valued equally and all young people should be enabled to develop their talents to the full;
  - ◆ the abolition of the Eleven-Plus Transfer Tests;
  - ◆ the ending of selection on academic grounds;
  - ◆ the development of a 'Pupil Profile' that would inform the individual learning needs of each pupil; and
  - ◆ the creation of a 'Collegiate System' of schools across Northern Ireland.
- 1.4 The Department of Education published the report in October 2001 for consultation until 28 June 2002 and invited:
  - ◆ comments on the proposals in the Burns Report;
  - ◆ suggestions for any modifications to the Burns proposals; and
  - ◆ suggestions for any alternative arrangements.

## CONSULTATION

- 1.5 The Review of Post-Primary Education has seen the largest ever consultation on an education issue. The Department adopted a multi-stranded approach to the consultation in order to ensure that all sections of the community had an opportunity to express their views:
- ◆ the Minister held 28 meetings with key interests in education, politics, business, the churches and the community to listen to their views on the Burns proposals and their suggestions for future post-primary arrangements;
  - ◆ the Department received over 1,300 written submissions from a range of stakeholders including Education Partners, political parties, schools, parents, business, teachers, churches, pupils, District Councils, voluntary groups and the general public;
  - ◆ a Detailed Response Booklet, along with a video and consultation pack, was issued to all schools, Institutes of Further and Higher Education, Training Organisations and a range of community groups. This generated the largest response ever from schools to a consultation with 510 schools (40%) submitting their views to the Department;
  - ◆ in an unprecedented exercise, Household Response Forms were issued to each household seeking the public's views on the Burns proposals. Just over 200,000 people, 16% of the adult population, responded. Just over a fifth of respondents also included additional comments;
  - ◆ a representative sample survey of 2,000 households was conducted seeking views on the key proposals in the Burns Report;
  - ◆ the Department sought the views of young people aged 14-19 years through a series of focus groups facilitated by the Northern Ireland Youth Forum. In addition, Save the Children independently conducted research into the views of primary school children.
- 1.6 More details on the different strands of the consultation are set out in Appendix 3.
- 1.7 Additional information, including full copies of the main submissions and statistical tables, are available on the Department's website [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)

## ANALYSIS OF CONSULTATION

1.8 This Report summarises and analyses responses to the consultation on the Burns proposals, including suggestions for modifications or alternatives. The main areas covered are:

- ◆ Guiding Principles
- ◆ Transfer Tests
- ◆ Academic Selection
- ◆ Pupil Profile
- ◆ Admissions Criteria
- ◆ Collegiates
- ◆ Other Issues

1.9 Under each main issue, the views expressed by respondents are grouped, where possible, and summarised under the headings: Education Partners; Schools; Churches; Higher/Further Education and Training; Business/Industry; Political Representatives; Public and Voluntary/Community Sector; Young People; Human Rights/Equality Interests and Others. A definition of these groupings is provided in Appendix 7.

1.10 For the purposes of this Report, the term “grammar school” refers to those post-primary schools which select pupils for admission on the basis of academic ability. The term “secondary school” refers to those post-primary schools which do not select on the basis of academic ability (although 3 secondary schools have an approved academic stream).

1.11 Every effort has been made to ensure that the views of respondents have been summarised accurately. It should be noted that not everyone commented on every issue and therefore some apparent gaps in coverage may reflect the fact that some organisations did not respond on that particular issue.

## Quantitative Terms

1.12 A number of quantitative terms are used in the Report. The terms correspond to percentages as follows:-

Almost/nearly all	-	More than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A substantial minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	Less than 10%

## CHAPTER 2 - GUIDING PRINCIPLES

2.1 **The Burns proposal** was for an education system which has as its focus the needs of young people and is underpinned by 12 Guiding Principles which should influence, and be at the heart of, policy and practice at all levels of the system. The Guiding Principles are:-

- ◆ each young person should be valued equally;
- ◆ all young people should be enabled to develop their talents to the full and to realise their creative potential, including accepting responsibility for their own lives and making a positive contribution to society;
- ◆ young people should be encouraged to develop a love of learning;
- ◆ the education system should provide for the development of all aspects of the individual, including the intellectual, spiritual, moral, cultural, social, physical, emotional and creative;
- ◆ the promotion and demonstration of a culture of tolerance, reconciliation and respect for diversity of cultures should be a seminal purpose of education;
- ◆ education should have regard to the changing needs of society and the economy;
- ◆ there should be recognition and support for the key role of teachers in the delivery of a high quality education system;
- ◆ each young person should be equipped with the values and skills needed for working and living in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century;
- ◆ there should be parity of esteem for vocational and academic educational opportunities;
- ◆ lifelong opportunities and choices for learning should be available to all;
- ◆ there should be equality of opportunity, access and excellence for all; and
- ◆ the curriculum and assessment arrangements should take account of research on learning abilities.

2.2 All 5 Boards supported the Guiding Principles. **The Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB)** felt there was a need to redefine much of the language that was used (such as the terms

“academic” and “vocational”) which might no longer be appropriate for an educational vision in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. **The South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB)** suggested that several principles be removed and the following principle added, “Teachers, support staff and parents should be highly valued as partners in the pursuit of excellence.” **The Southern Education and Library Board (SELB)** welcomed the expression of the value of each child and the need for parity of esteem for the different paths which young people may take.

- 2.3 **The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS)** considered that the Guiding Principles underpin the aspirations of the Northern Ireland Executive as set out in the Programme for Government and effectively require an end to academic selection.
- 2.4 **The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE)** fully endorsed the Guiding Principles, in particular the principle relating to the promotion and demonstration of a culture of tolerance. It acknowledged that all Education Partners have a role to play in encouraging a culture in which vocational and academic routes to educational success are accepted as being equally valid. It noted the critical role to be played in this by the development of a curriculum which values equally all types of provision.
- 2.5 **Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG) (Council for Irish-medium Education)** agreed that there should be equality of opportunity and equality of access to education for all young people.
- 2.6 **The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)** accepted the Guiding Principles as the basis for a successful post-primary education system. It considered that a radically changed curriculum, allied to the effective movement of information about each pupil through the education system, should provide the foundations for education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- 2.7 **The Governing Bodies Association** of voluntary grammar schools (**GBA**) accepted that the Guiding Principles were an entirely valid articulation of all that is desirable for the education of children. However, it stated that agreement on the Guiding Principles is only the first step towards agreeing how they might be delivered in practice.

- 2.8 The main Teachers' Unions supported the Guiding Principles. **The Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO)** stated that they formed the foundations on which the post-primary education system must be built. **The National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT)** stated that the needs of all our children must be paramount. **The National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)** was in full agreement with the principle that the promotion and demonstration of a culture of tolerance, reconciliation and respect for diversity of cultures should be a seminal purpose of education. **The Ulster Teachers' Union (UTU)** highlighted, in particular, its agreement with the Guiding Principles relating to parity of esteem and equality of opportunity for all students and to the recognition by the Review Body of the key role for teachers in the delivery of a high quality education system.
- 2.9 **The Secondary Heads Association Northern Ireland (SHANI)**, representing Principals and senior staff, mainly in controlled grammar schools, agreed with the Guiding Principles. It stated that the Principles are already embedded in the current system; they underpin any effective system of education; and there is no evidence that they would be better delivered under the proposed new system.
- 2.10 **The Association of Head Teachers in Secondary Schools (AHTSS)** considered that the needs of all our children must be paramount and, on these grounds, fully supported the Guiding Principles.
- 2.11 A majority of post-primary schools that commented on the Guiding Principles felt that they reflected their own schools' aims and ethos. In particular, there was support for the principles that each young person should be valued equally and that there should be parity of esteem for vocational and academic educational opportunities.
- 2.12 **The Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC)**, representing the interests of the main Protestant churches, supported the Guiding Principles, in particular, that each child should be valued equally. It felt that it was also important that each child was facilitated to find the most appropriate educational pathway and that there should be adequate provision and opportunity for pupils to change pathways. It agreed strongly that there should be parity of esteem for vocational and academic opportunities.

- 2.13 **Stranmillis University College** welcomed the Guiding Principles and commended the Review Body members for placing pupils and their needs at the centre of their analysis and recommendations. The **Association of Northern Ireland Colleges (ANIC)** as well as the **North West Institute of Further and Higher Education** welcomed the Guiding Principles but expressed concern as to whether or not they were fully reflected in the proposed implementation plan.
- 2.14 **The Confederation of British Industry (CBI)** supported the long-term vision set out in the Report but considered the Guiding Principles to be repetitive and too input based. It suggested that rather than defining what an education system should be, there should be a definition of the skills and attitudes young people should take away with them when leaving the system.
- 2.15 **The Institute of Directors (IoD)** broadly welcomed the Guiding Principles around which the Report was written. It felt they were consistent with the characteristics of the education system it considered desirable.
- 2.16 **The Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)** stated that future arrangements should be built around the basic concepts of excellence, diversity and choice. It argued that there were serious flaws in the way in which the Burns Report attempted to translate the Guiding Principles which it outlined into practical action. It considered that the Report placed great emphasis on the need to ensure equity between schools and pupils but at the expense of not focusing sharply enough on the overall standards presently achieved by our schools and how these might be improved.
- 2.17 **The Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP)** welcomed the Guiding Principles but had reservations about certain proposals, particularly in relation to the more practical aspects of realising the vision set out.
- 2.18 **The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)** stated that the Guiding Principles are such that they can be signed up to by anyone, but the Burns proposals do not respect a number of these Principles. It considered that a policy which ended academic selection would not respect the principle of according “parity of esteem for vocational and academic educational opportunities”. It also stated that a policy which replaced academic selection with social connection could not ensure “equality of opportunity, access and excellence for all”.

- 2.19 **Sinn Féin** considered that the public education system had a democratic and humanistic mission, which must be reflected in equal valuing, inclusion, strategies to compensate for disadvantage and the promotion of a culture of learning. It stated that the principle “equal regard for vocational and academic educational opportunities” implied some elective or selective system at age 14 between “particular educational or career pathways” but the Report failed to consult about this model.
- 2.20 **The Alliance Party** welcomed the Guiding Principles with their emphasis on child-centred education, maintaining options for as long as possible, engendering a culture of lifelong learning, continuity between educational sectors, curriculum diversification and, in particular, on a partnership approach to delivery.
- 2.21 **The Northern Ireland Women’s Coalition (NIWC)** fully endorsed the Guiding Principles.
- 2.22 **The Civic Forum** fully endorsed the broad Principles and objectives in the Report. It felt that a modern system should seek to match the educational programme to the student, not the student to the programme.
- 2.23 **The Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA)** strongly supported the Guiding Principles and considered that if they were to be adhered to, there must be a fundamental change to the education system as the current system fails to live up to the Principles. It welcomed the principles that the education system must take account of, and respond to, the community in a society emerging from conflict and the recognition that schools should promote lifelong learning.
- 2.24 **The Ulster Farmers’ Union (UFU)** fully supported the Guiding Principles, in particular that each young person should be valued equally and that there should be equality of opportunity, access and excellence for all.
- 2.25 **The NI Human Rights Commission (NIHRC)** welcomed the Guiding Principles and suggested that meeting them in practice would require substantial additional resources to enable all schools equally to meet the needs of the children within their care.

- 2.26 **The Equality Commission** supported the view that any new arrangements must ensure that all young people have access to education provision that meets their individual needs and promotes equality of opportunity and high quality learning and teaching. It agreed that an inclusive education system can enrich society at large and make a significant contribution to the development of mutual understanding, respect for different cultures and the responsibilities of citizenship.
- 2.27 **The Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ)** suggested that the Guiding Principles should be supplemented by a specific reference to the human rights of children and that this should be encapsulated into a Mission Statement which placed the child's needs centre-stage.
- 2.28 **The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education** suggested that references should be made to the entire international legal framework that provides guidance for numerous questions that are inevitably raised in contemplating such a profound change as reform of post-primary education.
- 2.29 **The Children's Law Centre** agreed with the Burns Vision and Guiding Principles but expressed concerns at the absence of a rights-based approach to the issue of education, which it argued was out of step with international norms. The standards set under international treaties should provide a starting point for any education system, in order to ensure that children's rights in and to education were protected in the future.
- 2.30 **The Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NIC.ICTU)** endorsed the Guiding Principles and in particular the concept that education should have regard to the changing needs of society and the economy.

## CHAPTER 3 - TRANSFER TESTS

- 3.1 **The Burns proposal** was to abolish the Transfer Tests (11 plus) which currently provide the means by which grammar schools select pupils for admission on the basis of academic ability.
- 3.2 All **5 Education and Library Boards, CCMS, NICIE, CnaG, CCEA**, the main Teachers' Unions (**ATL, INTO, NAHT, NASUWT, UTU**) and **GBA** agreed that the Transfer Tests should be abolished.
- 3.3 **The Catholic Heads Association (CHA)** representing the Headteachers of Catholic grammar schools, **SHANI** and **AHTSS** all agreed that the Transfer Tests should be abolished. **CHA** commented that no child should feel any sense of failure or loss of self-esteem because of the Transfer Procedure.
- 3.4 **CCEA** felt that the Transfer Tests should be abolished only when an action plan had been agreed and the roll-out of that plan has been sufficiently progressed. **SHANI** stated that the Tests should not be abolished until they could be replaced by a suitable form of academic selection which had been carefully designed, properly trialled and successfully piloted.
- 3.5 Most **schools** agreed that the Transfer Tests should cease to be used to select pupils for post-primary education at the earliest possible opportunity. This pattern was evident across all school sectors and across all board areas. Schools, particularly primary and secondary schools, stated that the current Tests were technically flawed, distorted the curriculum for children in P6 and P7, caused trauma and stress and labelled children as failures at age 11. A majority of grammar schools also believed that the Transfer Tests should cease and pointed to the need for a better alternative method of academic selection to be developed before the current system was changed.
- 3.6 Almost two thirds of **teachers**, in their response to the Household Response Form, indicated that the Transfer Test should be abolished.
- 3.7 **The Northern Catholic Bishops** and **TRC** agreed that the Transfer Tests should be abolished. The Northern Catholic Bishops stated that there was widespread recognition that any method of testing on the basis of a high stakes examination was

both inaccurate and unjust. TRC considered that the benefits for a minority of pupils had been at the expense of a huge loss of esteem for a greater number of pupils.

- 3.8 **Stranmillis University College** considered that the Transfer Tests had been generally discredited and that, while testing was a necessary part of education, this type of narrowly-focused intellectual testing had little validity. The 7 **Institutes of Further and Higher Education** that responded to this issue supported the abolition of the Transfer Tests as soon as possible. Most of the **Training Organisations** that responded supported the abolition of the Transfer Tests.
- 3.9 **CBI** and **IoD** supported the abolition of the Transfer Tests. **IoD** considered that this should take place only when a suitable alternative system of informed parental choice was available based on the use of the Pupil Profile. The receiving school should see the Pupil Profile prior to admission and be able to use it to refuse admission where the school considered that it could not meet the child's needs. **CBI's** support for ending the Transfer Tests was conditional on quality options being available to all pupils in order to match pupils' needs with the most appropriate education provision.
- 3.10 **UUP, SDLP, DUP, Sinn Féin, the Alliance Party, PUP** and the **Women's Coalition** supported the abolition of the Transfer Tests on the grounds that they had outlived their usefulness and were widely discredited. **UUP** and **DUP** considered that the Transfer Tests should be abolished only when suitable alternatives were available. **UUP** preferred progression towards informed parental involvement and choice using the Pupil Profile and **DUP** suggested a system of transfer based on a combination of external tests and information provided by the primary school.
- 3.11 **The Civic Forum** and the **4 District Councils** that responded supported the abolition of the Transfer Tests. **Larne District Council** took the view that change should not take place until an appropriate and viable alternative had been identified, prepared and tested.
- 3.12 A majority of respondents (57%) to the **Household Response Form**, which included a majority of parents, agreed that the Transfer Tests should be abolished. A substantial minority (32%) wanted to retain the Transfer Tests. A similar response was found in the **Omnibus Survey**. Support for the abolition of the Transfer Tests was higher among parents with children of

school age than other parents; higher among parents with children at secondary schools than parents with children at grammar schools; and higher in the responses from wards with the highest levels of social deprivation than those with the lowest levels of deprivation.

- 3.13 The view of a majority of **voluntary groups**, including those representing rural interests, and almost all of the **community groups** responding, was that the Transfer Tests should be abolished. **UFU** considered that alternative arrangements for academic selection should be in place before changes were implemented.
- 3.14 A majority of both primary and post-primary **pupils** were in favour of abolishing the Transfer Tests. They felt that the Transfer Tests were too limited and did not allow pupils to display their ability over a range of subjects. The Transfer Tests placed undue pressure on pupils and resulted in a sense of failure and a loss of self-confidence. This view was more prevalent among those who attended secondary school. A minority of pupils said that the Transfer Tests should not be abolished until a better alternative was put in place.
- 3.15 **NIHRC, the Equality Commission and CAJ** considered that the Transfer Tests should be abolished. NIHRC described the Transfer Tests as humiliating and stigmatising and argued that their abolition would improve the opportunities for children to gain an effective education. It stated that if another system were introduced, which was an 11+ by proxy, the positive effects of the removal of the 11+ would be eradicated. The Equality Commission said that the present system of transfer accentuated rather than moderated the effects of social class on the educational system.
- 3.16 **NIC.ICTU** and **NIPSA** considered that the Transfer Tests should be abolished.

## THE AGE OF TRANSFER

- 3.17 **The Burns proposal** was for no change in the age of transfer from primary to post-primary education.
- 3.18 Not all respondents commented on this issue. However, of those that did comment, a majority of Education Partners, a majority of schools, IoD, a majority of political parties and almost all community groups considered that transfer should continue to take place at age 11.

## **ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS**

- 3.19 There were suggestions for alternative testing arrangements to replace the Transfer Tests, for interim testing arrangements designed to lead into new transfer arrangements and for new transfer arrangements. These are described in the following chapter on academic selection.

## CHAPTER 4 - ACADEMIC SELECTION

- 4.1 **The Burns proposal** was that schools would not be allowed to use academic ability measured by a test or any other method to decide who should be given a place (as grammar schools do now) in a post-primary school.
- 4.2 This chapter summarises views as follows:
- ◆ Support for ending academic selection
    - alternatives to academic selection
      - informed election and arrangements for moving to this system
      - all ability comprehensive schools
  - ◆ Opposition to ending academic selection
    - modifications to the current system
  - ◆ Other views and suggestions for alternative arrangements

### SUPPORT FOR ENDING ACADEMIC SELECTION

- 4.3 All the **Education and Library Boards** took the views of schools and teachers into account in framing their responses and in 4 Boards there was a formal consultation process with schools. The Boards were unanimous in their support for the ending of academic selection at age 11. The reasons identified were that the current arrangements: caused inequality of opportunity; were outdated; had a detrimental effect on children; created more losers than winners and did not recognise the different paces at which young people develop. Each of the Boards also cited a number of key points in support of their view that change was required.
- 4.4 **BELB** considered that there should be a focus on the needs of the learner and that high quality provision was necessary in all learning pathways to meet those needs. The needs of all learners must be catered for irrespective of creed, ability and wealth and must be considered equal, irrespective of their abilities. There should be equal recognition of different learning pathways and flexibility between them.
- 4.5 **NEELB** acknowledged the strengths and weaknesses of the current arrangements but considered that new structures were necessary to allow all young people to play their part adequately

in the society of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This would require the education system to equip young people with the knowledge and skills to keep pace with change and advances in technology, to focus on the needs of individual learners, to provide high quality provision in all pathways to meet the needs of all learners, to develop the skills necessary for all young people to participate in the knowledge based economy and play a full part as an active citizen.

- 4.6 **SEELB** emphasised the centrality of the child in the educational process and that education structures must maximise the unique potential of all young people in their academic, moral and personal development to equip them for fulfilling lives and to play a productive role in society. Structural arrangements should encourage and support an enrichment of the quality of life for individuals, local communities and society through co-operation, mutual respect and real partnership.
- 4.7 **SELB** acknowledged the opportunities provided by grammar schools for children from diverse backgrounds but believed that the focus on the academic career path was no longer appropriate in a society and economy which valued skills and knowledge which were more widely based.
- 4.8 **WELB** considered that the education system should provide a broad, balanced and flexible curriculum for all pupils and that this flexibility would become increasingly important with the acceleration of technological change and the implications for the individual, society and the economy. The structures to meet this demand should not be tightly prescribed.
- 4.9 **CCMS** cited the impact of the current arrangements on individual children, on the socially disadvantaged and on the primary curriculum as well as the need to raise standards for all pupils and to have an education system which will meet future economic needs.
- 4.10 **NICIE** considered that the present system was fundamentally flawed and its negative impacts were greater than the positive effects for a minority of pupils.
- 4.11 **CnaG** considered that academic selection runs counter to the philosophy of equality of access to education for all and that children in Irish-medium schools have been disadvantaged by the nature of the Transfer Tests.

- 4.12 **CCEA** considered that the traditional model of grammar and secondary schools was not appropriate for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and the knowledge economy which Northern Ireland sought to develop. Curriculum change would be a key driver in the elimination of the need for selection.
- 4.13 The 5 main **Teachers' Unions (ATL, INTO, NAHT, NASUWT, UTU)** all supported the ending of academic selection for a variety of reasons including: the distortion of the primary curriculum; the associated stress and trauma; the impact on the majority of children who are regarded as failures; and the perpetuation of social and class divisions and inequalities.
- 4.14 **CHA** accepted the inappropriateness of the current transfer arrangements. It considered that academic selection may become unnecessary when certain conditions are met (see section Ending Academic Selection: Suggested Alternative Arrangements).
- 4.15 Almost two thirds of **schools** supported the proposal that post-primary schools should not select pupils for transfer from primary education on the basis of academic ability ie by external testing or teacher evaluation. However, responses across the sectors varied significantly; 60% of primary schools and 93% of secondary schools believed that academic selection should be abolished but less than 10% of grammar schools held this view. Those who supported the ending of academic selection argued that the current system was unfair to a significant majority of pupils, created elitism and failed to provide equality of opportunity for all.
- 4.16 The views of **teachers**, recorded through the responses to the Household Response Form, differed significantly from the views of schools in general, with less than a third wishing to see an end to academic selection.
- 4.17 The **Northern Catholic Bishops** considered that the current system had benefited many in our society but had failed many others. Anything that damaged self-confidence had no place in a healthy education system. The current system of giving priority to academic selection by schools was no longer tenable.
- 4.18 **TRC** considered that whilst the current arrangements had enabled a minority of pupils to achieve high standards of academic excellence, it had been at the expense of a huge loss of self-esteem for a greater number of pupils who have felt the stigma of being considered failures. The current arrangements

made little allowance for the range of levels and stages of maturation of pupils and gave little thought to their full variety of talents, aptitudes and learning abilities. There were unequal opportunities for admission to grammar schools.

- 4.19 In the FE Sector, the **Association of Northern Ireland Colleges** and most of the **Institutes of Further and Higher Education** that responded were in favour of ending academic selection.
- 4.20 **CBI** considered that change was required because the current system of post-primary education had failed to deliver the necessary outcomes to enable Northern Ireland to compete successfully in world markets. Weaknesses highlighted were:
- ◆ too many young people leaving school with low levels of attainment;
  - ◆ too many young people with poor literacy and numeracy skills;
  - ◆ many young people with no vocational skills relevant to the world of work;
  - ◆ key skills among graduates and other school leavers significantly below employers' expectations; and
  - ◆ many of our young people lacking the positive attitudes required.
- 4.21 **SDLP** considered that the current arrangements disadvantaged children from less affluent backgrounds and damaged the self-esteem of pupils. Ending academic selection would help to create greater equality of opportunity.
- 4.22 **Sinn Féin** referred to the stress caused by the current arrangements and the loss of self-esteem in many children who fail to gain a grammar school place. It considered that academic selection created a 2-tier system of post-primary education, channelled children into schools with unequal social status, discriminated against disadvantaged children, resulted in low achievement and might breach human rights.
- 4.23 The **Alliance Party** considered that the current selection arrangements had failed the majority of young people. The current system of examination and differentiation was contrary to the Party's values of equity, inclusion and diversity and failed to value each child's needs and abilities.

- 4.24 **PUP** considered that academic selection created inequality of educational opportunity, in particular for children from disadvantaged loyalist backgrounds. The current arrangements had created “sink” schools which reinforced the sense of failure felt by pupils.
- 4.25 The **NI Women’s Coalition** and the **Workers’ Party** both supported the ending of academic selection.
- 4.26 A substantial minority of respondents to the **Household Response Form** (30%) supported the ending of academic selection. This support was highest among parents with children at secondary schools and in wards with higher levels of social deprivation.
- 4.27 The views of the public obtained through the **Omnibus Survey** showed that 32% were in favour of ending academic selection.
- 4.28 Most **community groups** that responded agreed that academic selection should not be used as a means of transferring pupils to post-primary schools because it was considered to create elitism.
- 4.29 **NICVA**, in its role as the main umbrella body for the voluntary and community sector, consulted with its members and key organisations across the voluntary and community sectors and worked with the Rural Community Network, the Workers’ Educational Association (WEA), the Ulster People’s College and the Shankill Women’s Centre in formulating its response. It stated that the current education system had gross inequalities and was cementing division and disadvantage. Its consultation indicated no support for alternative methods of academic selection, which would always be socially divisive.
- 4.30 **Barnardo’s** consulted widely among its education projects and reported that the current system put extreme pressure on individual children and their families, instilled a sense of failure amongst many children, with potential long-term adverse implications, and contributed to a 2-tier, unequal, system of education.
- 4.31 The **Educational Guidance Service for Adults (EGSA)** and **WEA** identified the negative impact of failure at 11 on future motivation, resulting in low participation rates for adult learning.

- 4.32 An **Ad-hoc Consortium of Children’s Rights and Disability Groups** incorporating Disability Action, MENCAP, Save the Children, Royal National Institute for the Blind, Barnardo’s, National Deaf Children’s Society, the Down’s Syndrome Association, the National Association for Special Needs in NI, NICVA and Skill (NI) supported the ending of academic selection, and made particular reference to its impact on children with disabilities.
- 4.33 One third of **voluntary groups** which responded considered that academic selection promoted elitism and suggested that all pupils should have the opportunity to be developed to their full potential.
- 4.34 The **Southern Area Children and Young People’s Committee** was of the view that academic selection ran counter to the overarching social inclusion aim of the Children’s Services Plan and that the current process resulted in two thirds of children being regarded as failures at 11 and left individual children with diminished self-esteem.
- 4.35 **NIHRC** supported the ending of academic selection at age 11. It viewed the weaknesses of the current arrangements, identified by Gallagher and Smith and others, as having a human rights dimension. Academic selection disadvantaged children from lower socio-economic backgrounds and was thus contrary to the principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity. The Commission was not in favour of any system of academic selection at any other age, for example at 14 years.
- 4.36 The **Children’s Law Centre** felt that the current arrangements for post-primary education, including the transfer process in its current form, did not provide adequate protection for the rights of the child under a number of treaty obligations, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education, the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights. **CAJ** also drew attention to human rights issues and stated that the current arrangements exacerbate inequalities in our society.
- 4.37 The **Campaign Against Selection (CAS)** supported the ending of academic selection. **Education Reform 21** regarded academic selection as ineffective and unjust. **NIC.ICTU** considered that the current arrangements reinforced social

deprivation and worked against children from areas of social need, with the result that a minority of pupils benefited at the expense of other children. **NIPSA** also supported the ending of academic selection at age 11.

## **ENDING ACADEMIC SELECTION: SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS**

4.38 Alternative arrangements suggested for transfer to post-primary education included:

- ◆ a system of informed election; and
- ◆ all ability comprehensive schools.

### **Informed Election**

4.39 Informed election was described as a process in which parents, and/or pupils, consider the information and advice about the pupil and the range of educational opportunities and courses available, and then choose (elect) which courses or institutions to apply to for admission.

4.40 Four Education and Library Boards (**BELB, NEELB, SEELB, SELB**) together with **CCMS, CCEA, CHA, ATL, UTU**, a few **Institutes of Further and Higher Education, TRC, CBI, SDLP** and the **Alliance Party** proposed moving to a process of informed election to appropriate courses at age 14. The response from **WELB** also suggested informed election at age 11. The **Northern Catholic Bishops** considered that the current system, giving priority to academic selection by schools, was no longer tenable and there is a need to move towards informed parental choice.

4.41 **BELB** considered that the provision of education relevant to each young person's needs would be better accomplished by gradually shifting the focus for determining what are relevant learning pathways from age 11 to age 14. Up to age 14, pupils would receive the same educational entitlement. At age 14, informed by the Pupil Profile, the learner would take responsibility for choosing an educational pathway from provision at one or more local schools and education provision would respond flexibly to individuals' choices.

- 4.42 **NEELB** suggested arrangements whereby schools would function as part of a confederation serving defined catchment areas and pupils would follow a common curriculum in the first 2 or 3 years of post-primary education. Parents would exercise choice of school within those catchment areas.
- 4.43 **SEELB** suggested a common curriculum for all pupils from Years 1 to 10, the convergence of previously separate academic and technical/vocational routes and the opportunity for schools to develop distinctive specialisms. It proposed 3 separate models:
- ◆ pupils transfer at age 11 to local community colleges up to age 14 and then elect to attend specialist academies;
  - ◆ pupils transfer at age 11 to local community colleges and then elect within that college to follow appropriate educational pathways; and
  - ◆ pupils transfer at age 11 to 11-16 community colleges and then elect appropriate curriculum pathways in separate 6<sup>th</sup> form colleges.
- 4.44 **SELB** suggested a number of structures for its area to reflect local arrangements. The current 2-tier system and 11-18 non-selective systems that already operate in its area should continue. It considered that in the 2-tier system, pupil preference should be given major consideration in relation to pupils' choice of school and their education programme at age 14. Pupil preference should also be given major consideration in relation to transfer from 11-16 to 11-18 schools although academic aptitude should be taken into account where such a transfer is to pursue academic programmes of study.
- 4.45 In areas where academic selection currently operates at age 11, the Board proposed a transfer system using non-academic criteria. This would involve the pupil, parents, the primary school Principal and the post-primary school to which application has been made, using the information in the Pupil Profile, which should also be seen by the post-primary school. Differentiation would take place at age 14 which could involve a variety of arrangements: a 2-tier arrangement; post-14 programmes delivered entirely within individual schools or through co-operation with another school or schools; or 11-16 schools with a 6<sup>th</sup> form college.

- 4.46 **WELB** proposed transfer at age 11 on the basis of informed election to collaborative networks of schools which together would provide a broad and flexible curriculum. Any new arrangements should provide flexibility to assist local solutions for local areas.
- 4.47 **CCMS** proposed that informed choice or election should replace selection and that structures should reflect local circumstances. The Council suggested examples of a range of models which would allow local circumstances to be reflected, including single institutions where schools are large enough to offer curriculum flexibility; a campus of several schools within which smaller schools may function as 11-14 schools feeding into KS4 and 6<sup>th</sup> form provision; and 11-16 schools feeding into 6<sup>th</sup> form provision.
- 4.48 **CCEA** regarded curriculum change as the key driver towards the elimination of the need for selection over a period of years and that real parental and pupil choice would emerge giving rise to informed election replacing selection. The Council proposed that all pupils should be entitled to access the full range of curriculum choices within the same institution or within a cluster of institutions under the same management. Post-primary structures should emerge from local communities deciding what meets their needs and the broadest educational needs of their children and different models might emerge in different areas.
- 4.49 **CHA** considered that the curriculum should be reshaped to offer diverse pathways, which might involve collaboration among schools. It also considered that a Pupil Profile should be developed which included information about academic performance over a period of years to enable parents and schools, including receiving schools, to consider the appropriate provision for each child. CHA considered that when all this was in place, academic selection might become unnecessary.
- 4.50 **ATL** proposed transfer at age 11 to neighbourhood/community schools or colleges with a common curriculum to age 14. At the end of Key Stage 3 informed decisions about future pathways should take account of the Pupil Profile which would be backed up by robust externally moderated tests to confirm the Pupil Profile findings. Options at age 14 would be to an academic/technical/vocational curriculum and there should be flexibility between different types of schools to facilitate a change of direction.

- 4.51 **NASUWT's** preference was a system of comprehensive schools but it also considered that more consideration should have been given to election to pathways at age 14. (See also section on all ability comprehensive schools.)
- 4.52 **UTU** proposed that children should transfer at age 11 to their local secondary school and follow a common curriculum to age 14. At the end of Key Stage 3, a joint decision would be taken by a pupil and his/her parents about the academic or vocational route they wish to follow and the most appropriate school to cater for his/her needs.
- 4.53 The **Northern Catholic Bishops** considered that educational pathways must be chosen on the basis of informed parental election rather than selection by schools. All parents deserved to be empowered in making educational choices with their children. The Pupil Profile would enable them to make informed choices in the interests of their children and by focusing attention on pupils' needs, it would make it clear that schools must respond to those needs. The Bishops suggested that the range of curricular options could be provided either in a particular school, which must then of necessity be a large school, or among schools, with the possibility of eventually coming under a single management. Because of the wide range of school sizes, the Bishops considered that a one-fit-all solution was not appropriate.
- 4.54 The Bishops considered that all forms of academic selection should end, in favour of informed parental selection, when through curricular reform and enhanced collaboration between schools, curricular pathways were in place within each area and the agreed Pupil Profiles were available.
- 4.55 **TRC** suggested that decisions at age 11 should be made on the basis of parental preference using the information in the Pupil Profile which should be shared with receiving post-primary schools without being used as a selection tool. The Pupil Profile should continue to be developed through Key Stage 3 to facilitate the choice of the most suitable pathway for each pupil. At age 14, decisions would be made about appropriate pathways based on a number of weighted factors and evaluations which would be brought together in a points system to determine an appropriate outcome for transfer.
- 4.56 **CBI** supported the ending of academic selection and the use of the Pupil Profile combined with a system of informed parental preference, on the condition that quality options were available

to all pupils to enable pupils' needs to be matched with the most appropriate education provision. It referred to the dangers of a "one-size fits all" approach. A new system must increase standards of attainment, provide a range of quality options including a respected vocational route, ensure young people have the ability to learn lifelong and adapt, and maintain the excellence which pertains in parts of the current system.

- 4.57 **SDLP** suggested a system of all ability schools rather than distinct pathways at age 11 and that from age 14 every child would be entitled to choose from a range of academic and vocational subjects whichever school they attended.
- 4.58 The **Alliance Party** proposed a system of transfer at age 11 to a middle school and, at age 14, election to courses appropriate to each child's needs.
- 4.59 **NIHRC** considered that systems which process children into separate academic or vocational paths at an early age were not conducive to equality of opportunity. All young people should experience a breadth of learning pathways and should be facilitated in developing a range of knowledge and skills. Whatever structures were established, a system of all ability schools must be set up to ensure children have equal access to an effective education.
- 4.60 In addition, the Commission stated that all children should have a right to be consulted formally about their own education in accordance with their developing maturity. It recognised that whilst some children under 14 years old have the capacity to articulate their views about their education, it was likely that from 14 years onwards they will be more capable of doing so and contributing to the decision-making process.

## **SUGGESTED ARRANGEMENTS FOR MOVING TO INFORMED ELECTION**

- 4.61 The process of change was recognised as problematic by 3 Education and Library Boards. It was felt important that time should be made available for schools and the education system to prepare for and adjust to change. Three Boards proposed a phased process of change involving pupils transferring at age 11 on the basis of academic selection with the proportion of pupils transferring on this basis being progressively reduced over a period of time.

- 4.62 **BELB** suggested 2 possible transitional approaches. Firstly, implementing change in parallel with curriculum change without any gradual phasing out of academic selection. New arrangements would be implemented in year 8 and phased through with that cohort of pupils.
- 4.63 The second model would involve an extension to academic selection. For a 3-year period all post-primary schools would be enabled to select pupils on the basis of the Burns admissions criteria alongside the selection of a reducing proportion of pupils on the basis of academic ability, as measured by the results of a series of standardised tests in P6 and P7. The standardised tests would be developed by educational psychologists across the 5 Boards, would include English and Mathematics and would be administered in normal classroom conditions. The proportion of children selected on the basis of the standardised test results would be systematically reduced by a uniform percentage over the 3-year period. The aim would be to permit the gradual transition away from a focus on 11 year olds, during which time consortia would develop appropriate provision for 14-19 year olds.
- 4.64 **NEELB** suggested a 10-year implementation period. In the first 5 years, the Board would establish clustering networks serving defined catchment areas. During this period, the results of revised tests, devised and marked by CCEA, would be used to determine admission to schools previously designated as grammar schools. The proportion of pupils gaining access to grammar schools on the basis of the test results would be reduced over this period of time and these schools would be required to accept pupils using non-academic criteria.
- 4.65 Thereafter, a structure of confederations of schools serving defined catchment areas would be established. This would be built on clustering arrangements developed over the first 5 years. At age 11, parents would have the option of exercising choice within the defined catchment areas. All pupils would follow a common curriculum in the first 2 or 3 years but there would be increasing flexibility thereafter. The Board considered that at age 14, pupils were more mature and capable of making informed choices. Decisions about future pathways at that stage would be made on the basis of informed election using the information in the Pupil Profile. The majority of pupils would be able to complete their 11-18 education within a confederation.

4.66 **SELB** suggested 3 models of transitional arrangements in areas where academic selection at age 11 currently operates. The aim was to provide time for the development of the Pupil Profile when admissions would be made on the basis of non-academic criteria:

- (i) A weighted points system would operate with points awarded for academic achievement, the views of parents and pupils and the recommendation of the Primary Principal. Over a 3-year period the relative weightings would alter to give the highest weightings to parent/pupil preference.
- (ii) Over a 3-year period there would be a phased reduction in the percentage of pupils admitted to current grammar schools on the basis of academic ability as determined by the Transfer Test results and the remaining places would be filled using non-academic criteria. At the end of 3 years, non-academic criteria would apply to all admissions. Placements would be the decision of a group under Board aegis but representative of all types of school.
- (iii) Arrangements similar to (ii) above but with the Principals of schools having responsibility for placements instead of the Board group.

4.67 The **Southern Area Children and Young People's Committee** also suggested these models.

4.68 **CCEA** proposed a transition from selection to informed election over a 5-7 year period. During this period selection to oversubscribed grammar schools should continue to be made on an educational basis that seeks to match the interests and attributes of the child with the particular offerings of the institutions. The Transfer Tests would continue during this period but as curricular changes were introduced the need for them could diminish to become the exception rather than the rule.

## **ALL ABILITY COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS**

4.69 **NICIE** argued that selection on the grounds of academic ability should have no place in a modern society which declares itself to be committed to the continuous improvement of educational

opportunities for all its young people and, based on its experiences of establishing all ability integrated colleges, suggested a system of all ability comprehensive education.

- 4.70 **CnaG** supported an all ability model in the context of Irish-medium post-primary education, which is already organised in this way.
- 4.71 **NASUWT** stated that it would prefer a system of comprehensive schools. (See also **NASUWT** comments in the section on informed election.) **NAHT** supported a fully non-selective system. **INTO** also preferred a system of all ability schools but suggested a discussion process involving all the Education Partners to determine the future arrangements. **AHTSS** proposed a fully non-selective system.
- 4.72 **Sinn Féin** proposed a system of all ability neighbourhood comprehensive schools at age 11 operating on the basis of catchment areas, subject to the introduction of a common curriculum and an increase in funding targeted on social need.
- 4.73 **PUP** proposed the establishment of a system of secular comprehensive schools which would provide education of equal quality.
- 4.74 The **Workers' Party** and the **NI Women's Coalition** both supported the ending of academic selection and the development of a system of comprehensive education.
- 4.75 The **Southern Area Children and Young People's Committee** considered that any new arrangements must value all children equally and suggested that consideration should be given to comprehensive education. (See also section on Selection at 14/Dickson Plan.)
- 4.76 **NIPSA** suggested the establishment of a system of comprehensive schools for pupils aged 11-18.
- 4.77 **Education Reform 21** suggested that a comprehensive system could be provided through a range of different models. This would provide full curricular provision for all types and levels of intelligence, which would be flexible and provide individual learning programmes, ensure parity of esteem for different pathways, avoid premature decisions about pathways and provide equal opportunities for every child.

- 4.78 **CAS** supported the introduction of a comprehensive system and asked that a review of comprehensive education be undertaken urgently.

## OPPOSITION TO ENDING ACADEMIC SELECTION

- 4.79 **GBA** accepted that the current testing arrangements, where the results could be skewed by wealthier families having their children coached, were unsatisfactory. However, it argued that the reasons for the current weaknesses in our system included the failure to invest in primary schools, the non-repeatable nature of the tests and the rigidity of the current structures which put too many children into an educational pathway urgently in need of curricular reform. It considered that the Burns proposals would lead to neighbourhood comprehensive schools which, in its view, have been discredited elsewhere in the UK and have not delivered the high educational standards achieved in Northern Ireland.
- 4.80 **SHANI** claimed that research illustrated that an all ability system results in overall lowering of academic standards to the detriment of all pupils and especially the more able, and stated that pupils with academic ability should not be penalised in any future arrangements. SHANI suggested that the ending of academic selection would create comprehensive schools, that the experience in England is that they do not confer equal value on children and seriously disadvantage the children who were supposed to benefit - the socially disadvantaged - and that a “one-size fits all” model would disable schools’ abilities to tailor education to the needs of individuals.
- 4.81 Among **schools**, the proposal to end academic selection was not supported by 91% of grammar schools. A small number of schools submitted additional comments or written responses which indicated that they were concerned that any change to existing structures would lead to a lowering of standards in schools and a reduction in the qualification levels achieved by pupils at present. A few stated that the current system matched pupils to schools, that less able pupils suffer in mixed ability classes and that there was no need for change. In the primary sector, a small number of schools believed that efforts should focus on improving secondary schools and that grammar schools should be left alone.

- 4.82 **IoD** argued that one of the education system's purposes should be to support the development of a modern, vibrant economy. It must provide the tools of knowledge, skill, learning and application essential to the development of a strong knowledge-based economy. IoD considered that Northern Ireland has as good a level of educational achievement - if not better - than any other part of the United Kingdom and had concerns about changing a system that works for most people.
- 4.83 A majority of the 16 **Training Organisations** which responded were not in favour of ending selection on the basis of academic ability.
- 4.84 **UUP** agreed that the 11+ examination had outlived its usefulness and should be replaced, but rejected any proposals which, in its view, endangered all that had been achieved by Northern Ireland schools over recent decades. It considered that the widely recognised strengths of education in Northern Ireland must be retained, that diversity among school types must be encouraged and that parents should have choice. It expressed concern that the ending of academic selection, with no safeguards for school standards, would result in a drift towards all schools effectively becoming comprehensives. It argued that the experience of the non-selective comprehensive system in GB was that such a system would not result in any overall improvement in standards or improvements in performance at the lower end of the attainment spectrum.
- 4.85 **DUP** argued that there was no need or desire for the seismic changes in the education system in Northern Ireland proposed by the Burns Report. It argued that the Burns view undermined the good work done in schools of all types, ignored the high levels of satisfaction which parents and pupils recorded in relation to local schools and paid no regard to the educational achievements at all levels within the current system.
- 4.86 DUP also argued that it was not possible to have a system of education which did not entail selection. Selection was a fact of educational life – it was not possible for every child to be top of the class. It considered that the Burns proposals and abolishing academic selection would lead to a system of all ability comprehensive schools which it regarded as having failed young people in England, especially those from poor working class backgrounds.

- 4.87 The 4 **District Councils** which responded had concerns that changes to the current system would lower standards and introduce a comprehensive system with the difficulties faced in some parts of England.
- 4.88 A majority of respondents to the **Household Response Form** (64%), and a majority of parents (63%), were not in favour of ending academic selection. This was highest in the responses from those wards with the lowest levels of social deprivation.
- 4.89 Respondents also provided additional comments to support or explain the reasons for their responses. In addition, members of the public, including parents, provided individual written submissions. The most frequently expressed comments from respondents who did not support the ending of academic selection were:
- ◆ there is no need for change;
  - ◆ it is better to educate similar ability pupils together;
  - ◆ we have the best results and change will lower standards;
  - ◆ leave the grammar schools alone but improve the secondary schools;
  - ◆ pupils need different pathways to match their abilities and aptitudes eg academic, vocational etc; and
  - ◆ do not want to create problems similar to those experienced in England.
- 4.90 The views of the public, obtained through the **Omnibus Survey**, showed that 54% did not support the ending of academic selection.
- 4.91 **UFU** acknowledged that change was necessary and stated that pupils deserved to be educated in a way that maximised their potential. The current method of selection (11+ Transfer Tests) was wrong but not selection itself and some form of academic selection was necessary to meet the academic abilities and needs of children.
- 4.92 The **Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster** suggested that the emphasis on academic selection should end but that some form of selection will continue to be necessary.

## MODIFICATIONS TO ACADEMIC SELECTION

- 4.93 **GBA** suggested that there should be a variety of educational pathways enjoying equal esteem and sufficient flexibility for children to move among them. Transfer should continue to take place at age 11 using the Pupil Profile which receiving schools should see before admission.
- 4.94 **SHANI** suggested that pupils should be selected for admission using a portfolio of information based on existing good practice in primary schools, beginning with the end of Key Stage 1 tests and including skills, aptitudes and abilities. All post-primary schools should use these portfolios in the process with the aim that pupils receive an education best suited to their needs.
- 4.95 A few **schools** within the primary, secondary and grammar sectors, which supported the retention of some form of academic selection suggested continuous assessment of pupils over a number of years as a possible alternative, whilst others believed that selection should take into account a range of abilities, not just academic ability. There was support from a few schools, mainly in the primary sector, for the use of the Pupil Profile to select pupils for schools.
- 4.96 **IoD** argued that there would always be some pupils who achieve less than their counterparts and the solution was not to provide the same education for every child but to ensure that real choice was available. The changed system should be a multiple one offering extensive opportunities building on the existing base. It considered that popular schools should be allowed to expand and that more schools of the same type should be established.
- 4.97 **IoD** supported the proposal for informed parental choice at age 11 and the development of the Pupil Profile, but argued that the Pupil Profile should be made available to receiving schools prior to transfer and that post-primary schools should be able to refuse admission if they consider they are unlikely to be able to support the best interests of the child. All schools should offer a narrow core of subjects and the other subjects offered should vary depending on whether the school has a more academic or vocational bias. A further choice should be available at age 14 when a pupil, with advice and assistance, would decide to follow a vocationally or academically weighted route.
- 4.98 **UUP** proposed that there should be a greater diversity of provision available in schools. Each school should develop its own ethos and an academic option should continue to be

available in grammar schools and some other post-primary schools. Some schools might concentrate on providing a good sound general education, others on developing a strong technological or vocational focus. All school types and courses should have parity of esteem. Education Authorities should increase provision in popular types of school and ensure that a range of options was available to meet the differing needs of pupils. Arrangements should allow for local solutions to suit local areas and existing arrangements such as the Dickson Plan should be retained where appropriate.

- 4.99 UUP argued that new arrangements must try to match pupils' ability and aspirations as closely as possible to what any post-primary school can provide. Decisions should be based on guided parental choice, using a Pupil Profile containing an element of objective external assessment, which should be made available to post-primary schools so that they could provide advice to parents. As school provision developed over time to match parental wishes it would be possible to give precedence to parental choice. There should be increased flexibility for transfer between different schools, particularly in years 8 and 9, as some pupils might find that the school they attended did not meet their needs or that they were struggling to keep pace. There should be formal arrangements for such moves where there was a clear mismatch between pupil ability and what the school was providing.
- 4.100 **DUP** considered that different children have different educational needs and society has a variety of requirements from school leavers and should provide a choice of schools to cater for those requirements. The educational pathway chosen by youngsters at post-primary level should be based on a sound educational assessment and not on social or economic factors. It proposed the continuation of academic selection using a system of externally set and moderated tests over the last 2 years of primary education which could be supplemented by information about those aspects of a pupil's work and abilities which were not amenable to testing.
- 4.101 DUP suggested that schools might be broadly divided into academic, technical and vocational but that there would be room for a variety of specialisms. Pupils and parents would choose a school on the basis of what it offered. The post-primary routes chosen should carry equal esteem in terms of the resources afforded and the value of the course and its outcomes. Schools which wished to have a strong academic emphasis could not

accept children who did not reflect those academic abilities just to fill places. The system should be sufficiently flexible to ensure basic standards of literacy and numeracy as well as reflecting the different academic abilities of children. There should be more opportunities for children to move school if the original choice was inappropriate.

- 4.102 Of those **voluntary groups** not in favour of ending academic selection, there was a view that it should be based on continuous assessment and should take account of the full range of a child's abilities.
- 4.103 **Barnardo's** suggested that if academic selection were retained it should be based on continuous assessment of a wide range of school subjects and attributes. Barnardo's also noted concern amongst some of those participating in its consultation that the ending of academic selection might remove the opportunity for some children to access a grammar level education and that this issue must be addressed.
- 4.104 **EGSA** was not in favour of academic selection but stated that if it were retained it should be aimed at older children, be more holistic and match the full range of pupils' skills and abilities.
- 4.105 **UFU** suggested a range of alternatives:
- ◆ the Dickson Plan and selection at age 14;
  - ◆ the system in Cookstown, where the grammar school and secondary school are on the same site. It acknowledged that these arrangements might not be feasible in other areas due to the size and location of school buildings;
  - ◆ technical colleges to provide highly valued technical and vocational training; and
  - ◆ grammar schools permitted to retain their academic ethos and a voluntary selection process if they so choose. This voluntary process would be outside the remit of provision made by primary schools.
- 4.106 **The Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster** considered that some form of selection would continue to be necessary to help guide and match children to the school best positioned to develop their individual needs and abilities. Consideration should be given to

the re-introduction of Technical Schools. Children in post-primary school should continue to be streamed to ensure that the more academic were stretched and there was provision for the needs of the less academic.

## **OTHER VIEWS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS**

- 4.107 Primary and post-primary **pupils** were divided equally for and against ending academic selection.
- 4.108 Young people who supported the ending of academic selection suggested that pupils should be able to attend the post-primary school of their choice and that pupils of different abilities should be taught together.
- 4.109 Young people not in favour of ending academic selection felt that some identification of pupils' abilities was necessary to help parents, children and the post-primary school make decisions. Primary pupils felt that it was better to educate similar ability pupils together and that mixed ability classes would cause problems for both teachers and higher achieving pupils. There was a marked difference in responses between grammar school pupils and secondary school pupils: a majority of grammar school pupils favoured retaining some form of academic selection in order to maintain standards. However, they raised concerns about the nature, content and timing of the selection process.
- 4.110 Primary pupils expressed strong support for consideration of pupils' abilities across all subject areas and for continuous assessment. Alternative methods of selection suggested by post-primary pupils included interviews with pupils, parents, Principals and teachers; entrance examinations; and primary school reports.
- 4.111 The **Equality Commission** considered that the current arrangements accentuated rather than moderated the effects of social class on the educational system and agreed that the current system of transfer to post-primary education should be discontinued. It argued that in addition to distorting the primary curriculum, the social segregation between grammar and secondary schools was accompanied by lower status and esteem being accorded to secondary schools and their pupils. The current arrangements might contribute to social exclusion, inequality and disadvantage.

- 4.112 The Equality Commission believed that the main objective of education structures and funding should be to (i) secure the achievement of the highest possible standard by all pupils; and (ii) provide equality of opportunity for all and mitigate socio-economic and educational disadvantage. It suggested that any new arrangements should retain and extend the high quality outcomes of the present system while reducing the inequalities that exist. They must also ensure that all young people have access to education provision that meets their individual needs and promotes equality of opportunity and high quality learning and teaching.

### Selection at 14/Dickson Plan

- 4.113 A few of the **schools** which submitted additional comments suggested that the Dickson Plan or a similar system of post-primary education should be examined as a possible model for the future. A small number of schools supported selection at age 14 as a possible alternative to the current system.
- 4.114 The small number of **Institutes of Further and Higher Education** which offered written comments thought age 14 to be a more appropriate time to make choices about future pathways.
- 4.115 A small number of the written comments submitted by members of the **public** supported delaying selection until age 14 as in the Dickson Plan as did a small number of **voluntary groups**.
- 4.116 The **Civic Forum** considered that delayed selection at age 14 should be considered if it allows talents to develop and mature. Vocational and academic activities should have equal standing.
- 4.117 The **Southern Area Children and Young People's Committee** considered that any new arrangements must value all children equally and suggested that consideration should be given to the Dickson Plan 2-tier system. (See also section on All Ability Comprehensive Schools.)

### Other Comments

- 4.118 **MENCAP** considered that replacement structures should take into account equality of opportunity for children with special educational needs so that the isolation they have experienced in the education system was alleviated where possible.

4.119 The **Children's Law Centre** considered that changes to the post-primary education system should take place against a backdrop of a clear commitment to international human rights and equality principles. There was a clear need to establish a platform of human rights and equality standards, which would underpin all the strategic and detailed planning necessary to implement new arrangements.

## CHAPTER 5 - PUPIL PROFILE

- 5.1 The **Burns proposal** was that in the last 3 years of primary education, schools would bring together information about each child in a Pupil Profile. This would provide information to parents, pupils and teachers on a wide range of attributes and achievements of children as they progress through their education and would be used to guide parents and children in their choice of post-primary school.
- 5.2 Burns recommended that post-primary schools should not use the Pupil Profile to decide which pupils to admit. Post-primary schools should receive the Pupil Profile at the point when decisions have been taken about who should get a place.

### SUPPORT FOR PUPIL PROFILE

- 5.3 There was widespread support among the **Education Partners** for the development of a Pupil Profile as a means of providing information on the attributes and achievements of children both to inform teaching and to help parents and children make decisions about choice of school and future pathways.
- 5.4 All 5 Education and Library Boards expressed broad support for the development of a Pupil Profile. **BELB** indicated that it could be used to inform the learner's choice of pathway at age 14. **WELB** recommended that the Pupil Profile include qualitative and quantitative information and its development should be accompanied by appropriate training and the involvement of parents and teachers. **NEELB** agreed that the Pupil Profile should give an holistic picture of each child and should be used regularly throughout the education process to inform decisions. **SEELB** and **SELB** expressed some concerns and proposed modifications to the proposal which are outlined below.
- 5.5 **CCMS** welcomed the development of a Pupil Profile which could facilitate a movement towards a culture of election ie 'informed choice', rather than selection.
- 5.6 **NICIE** welcomed the Pupil Profile provided it was not used as an alternative means of selection and suggested that it should be developed within the context of CCEA's Curriculum Review.

- 5.7 **CnaG** agreed that a Pupil Profile should be developed to assist parents in choosing post-primary schools for their children and suggested that a parallel Pupil Profile be developed for Irish-medium schools.
- 5.8 **CCEA** stated that the Pupil Profile should not relate specifically to the process of transfer from primary to post-primary school but should be used regularly to inform decisions about how best to meet the needs of each child. It agreed that the Pupil Profile should be comprehensive in scope and not focus solely on attainment in subjects. Information should pass through each stage of education with the child and be properly valued by those who receive it. Effective recording and reporting mechanisms would be facilitated by technological developments.
- 5.9 The 5 main Teachers' Unions (**ATL, INTO, NAHT, NASUWT, UTU**) supported the concept of a Pupil Profile.
- 5.10 **GBA** felt that the Pupil Profile could have real value but, in the form recommended by the Review Body, lacked purpose. It argued that a Pupil Profile should be built up over several years (at least 3) and should contain measured indications of attainment in numeracy and literacy. **SHANI** and **CHA** felt that the Pupil Profile would help place pupils in an appropriate school and would ensure each child gains maximum benefit from the range of educational experiences provided. **AHTSS** agreed that the Pupil Profile should be part of a continuing and evolving assessment process throughout a child's post-primary education.
- 5.11 Nearly all **schools** (91%) supported the Pupil Profile. They saw this as a fair way of assessing pupils' abilities and aptitudes, providing better information for parents and helping them to decide on the most appropriate school for their child.
- 5.12 Schools also agreed with the proposal that the Department should determine the detailed nature and scope of the Pupil Profile, based on advice from CCEA and in consultation with the Education Partners. Comments from schools reflected the need for the Pupil Profile to be standardised across all schools, with systems in place to ensure consistency and moderation.
- 5.13 The **Northern Catholic Bishops** welcomed the Pupil Profile and suggested that it should be used to identify learning styles rather than just academic achievements. They felt it could also encourage young people to take responsibility for their learning

and would put an emphasis on life-long learning. The Pupil Profile must be structured, tested and monitored and parents should have ownership of it.

- 5.14 **TRC** agreed that a carefully devised Pupil Profile would enable a more fully informed choice of post-primary school. It should be used to diagnose weaknesses and deficiencies which should receive professional help and resources.
- 5.15 Most of the **Institutes of Further and Higher Education** and the **Training Organisations** that responded, agreed with the Pupil Profile proposal. **Stranmillis University College** felt the Pupil Profile would assist the development of enhanced dialogue between the primary and secondary sectors, would impact positively on the education of children and be an important aspect of the future work of the primary school.
- 5.16 **IoD** welcomed a system of informed parental preference assisted by a Pupil Profile. **CBI** suggested that the content of the Pupil Profile should include exam results, targets for achievement, a record of progress in developing key skills in communication, numeracy, IT etc.
- 5.17 Among the political parties that responded, there was support for the creation of a Pupil Profile from **UUP, SDLP, Sinn Féin, the Alliance Party** and the **Women's Coalition**.
- 5.18 **UUP** felt that it would be a realistic way of making necessary information available to parents to allow for informed choice.
- 5.19 **SDLP** felt that a Pupil Profile could play an important part in increasing parity of esteem for all types of learning.
- 5.20 **Sinn Féin** stated that a Pupil Profile was good educational practice if it was used by pupils and their teachers as a tool for summative and formative assessment.
- 5.21 The **Alliance Party** suggested that the Pupil Profile could play an important role in fostering links between primary and post-primary educators to ensure continuity of education. It would also be instrumental in career development and planning.
- 5.22 The **Women's Coalition** felt that the Pupil Profile would be a more sensitive, diagnostic and supportive tool for assessing and supporting the student's needs and capabilities.

- 5.23 The **Civic Forum** felt that the objective of the Pupil Profile should be to identify pathways of study for all pupils at post-primary level, not simply to select out those who are to pursue a narrow 'academic' course of study.
- 5.24 The 4 **District Councils** that responded also supported a Pupil Profile that would provide a more holistic assessment of the pupil.
- 5.25 There was a general consensus among **young people, voluntary/community groups**, including **NICVA** and **Disability Action** and **CAS** that the Pupil Profile was a fairer means of assessing a wider range of abilities as it would provide a more holistic assessment of the child. Most pupils were in favour of the proposal as they felt it would help match pupils with an appropriate school and would enable teachers to group pupils with similar needs and abilities.
- 5.26 Most responses to the **Household Response Form** (77%) indicated that they were in favour of the development of a Pupil Profile to help parents express a preference for an appropriate post-primary school for their children. The **Omnibus Survey** produced a similar result.
- 5.27 **NIHRC** stated that it had no objection to the Pupil Profile provided it was not used as a tool for academic selection and the **Equality Commission** felt that the Pupil Profile would help meet the individual abilities and needs of all young people.

## CONCERNS ABOUT PUPIL PROFILE

- 5.28 While all respondents broadly supported the development of a Pupil Profile, a range of different concerns and views was expressed.
- 5.29 Concerns were voiced by **CnaG**, most **Teachers' Unions**, **SDLP**, **DUP**, **Sinn Féin**, the **Women's Coalition**, **TRC**, the 4 **District Councils**, **AHTSS**, **voluntary/community groups** including **NICVA**, **NIC.ICTU** and the **Children's Law Centre** about the potential additional pressure on teachers from parents and increased workload for teachers due to completion of Pupil Profiles. **NIC.ICTU** stressed the need for full consultation with Teachers' Unions on this matter. **CnaG** suggested that, to avoid putting too much pressure on primary teachers and Principals, standardised assessment instruments should be an integral part of the Pupil Profile.

- 5.30 **DUP** felt that the Pupil Profile in its present form would create a series of problems relating to the subjective nature of qualitative information, pressure on teachers and lack of consistency across schools. DUP also argued that, since there would be no control over how the receiving school would use the Pupil Profile once the pupils were admitted, the Pupil Profile could acquire a significance which Burns did not intend eg for streaming purposes. This would in turn put even more pressure on teachers in primary schools.
- 5.31 The **Civic Forum** felt it was vital that any Pupil Profile was sufficiently robust and comprehensive to inspire confidence among parents so that they could make the best choice for their children.
- 5.32 The main concerns expressed by **schools** were about the subjective nature of the Pupil Profile, the additional teacher training required to ensure consistency in its completion and that parents might ignore the Pupil Profile when making decisions about the choice of post-primary school.
- 5.33 **Stranmillis University College** suggested that the Pupil Profile should be based on an ICT solution to ease workload problems and that initial and professional development programmes in the University College would be needed to address pupil profiling in the primary school.
- 5.34 Whilst a majority of **teachers** who responded to the Household Response Form also believed that a Pupil Profile should be developed, they had worries regarding the additional workload. A significant minority of **young people** were not satisfied that teachers would be fair and objective when compiling Pupil Profiles.
- 5.35 **NIHRC**, the **Equality Commission**, **CAJ**, and **Sinn Féin**, contended that considerable parental knowledge would be required to evaluate the Pupil Profile, which could disadvantage those parents from lower socio-economic groups. They felt that consideration should be given to how best to avoid this discriminatory effect. **NEELB** suggested that parents should receive guidance and advice about interpreting the information in the Pupil Profile.
- 5.36 **The United Nations Rapporteur on the Right to Education** raised 2 concerns with the Pupil Profile proposal – the issue of access to the information contained in the Pupil Profile by the pupils themselves and their right to correct data that may be

inaccurate and the safeguards needed to prevent dissemination and use of personal information except under specified conditions.

## **PUPIL PROFILE SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR ADMISSION PURPOSES**

### **Support**

- 5.37 There was widespread support for the proposal that the Pupil Profile should not be used for admissions purposes from **NEELB, WELB, CCMS, NICIE, CCEA, INTO, UTU, NAHT, AHTSS, CAS** and **Barnardo's**. **SELB, CCEA** and **TRC** considered that, while the Pupil Profile should not be used for selection, all interested parties should have access to it to help make more informed decisions about educational pathways.
- 5.38 Almost two thirds of all **schools** agreed that the Pupil Profile should **not** be used by post-primary schools to select pupils. However there was considerable variation across the sectors. While 63% of primary schools and 93% of secondary schools agreed that it should not be used for admissions, 93% of grammar schools felt that it should. **SDLP, Sinn Féin, the Alliance Party** and the **Women's Coalition** agreed that the Pupil Profile should **not** be used for pupil selection.
- 5.39 Most of the **voluntary groups** which responded also agreed that the Pupil Profile should **not** be used by schools as a means of selecting pupils for admission but that it should be available to post-primary schools when the admissions procedure was finalised.
- 5.40 **NICVA** stated that there was a fear that the Pupil Profile would be used as a subliminal selection process with the selection decision taken by individual teachers. It stated that the way to tackle this fear was to provide adequate, tailored support and encouragement to parents.
- 5.41 **NIHRC** also expressed strong opposition to the use of the Pupil Profile as a means of selection, particularly given its subjective nature.

## Opposition

- 5.42 **GBA, SHANI** and **IoD** disagreed with the Burns proposal that the Pupil Profile should not be used for admissions purposes. **GBA** argued that prior access was necessary to allow some schools to retain an academic ethos and would also reduce the risk of children being placed on an inappropriate educational pathway.
- 5.43 **IoD** also felt that post-primary schools should see the Pupil Profile before admission in order to protect schools' ethos and individual identity. It suggested that schools should be able to refuse to admit a child where a Pupil Profile indicates that the choice of that school would not be appropriate to meet the child's needs.
- 5.44 **UUP** considered that post-primary schools to which admission is sought must be involved in discussions about matching pupils' abilities and aspirations using the Pupil Profile. As school provision develops over time to match parental wishes it will be possible to give precedence to parental choice.
- 5.45 Three of the 4 **District Councils** which responded proposed that the Pupil Profile should be used as a means of selection. The **Civic Forum** suggested that further consideration should be given to allowing post-primary schools access to the Pupil Profiles.
- 5.46 Comments in the Household Response Form and in written submissions indicated that a substantial minority of the public felt that the Pupil Profile should be used for admissions purposes. **UFU** felt that the Pupil Profile should be made available to post-primary schools to allow them to cater for the needs of individual pupils. It felt that the Pupil Profile could be used to select pupils for certain schools.
- 5.47 **Post-primary pupils** were evenly divided over whether or not the Pupil Profile should be provided to the post-primary school prior to selection.

## MODIFICATIONS TO THE PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP A PUPIL PROFILE

- 5.48 Most of the **post-primary pupils, SHANI, CHA** and **TRC** felt that the Pupil Profile should be developed throughout primary school rather than over just the last 3 years.
- 5.49 **SELB** suggested that the current Records of Achievement be refined for transfer purposes. **SEELB** suggested that the Pupil Profile be extended into a Lifelong Learning Profile and, from Year 11 onwards, credits should be awarded for the development of all types of achievement and should be added to throughout further and higher education.
- 5.50 There were widely held views that the Pupil Profile should contain both qualitative and quantitative information about each pupil and a number of respondents - **WELB, TRC, UTU, NAHT, ATL, SHANI, CnaG, CBI, UUP, SDLP, DUP**, the **Alliance Party** and the **Women's Coalition** - suggested that it should include some form of standardised or objective information or be subject to moderation to ensure consistency.

## CHAPTER 6 - ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

- 6.1 The **Burns proposal** was that no school should be allowed to use academic criteria for admissions purposes and that all schools should be required to use a uniform set of criteria in a specified order to decide who should get a place.
- ◆ **Parental (and pupil) Preference**, ie first preferences would have priority over second preference applications etc. This should be the first priority criterion in determining the allocation of places. In circumstances where a school was over-subscribed at any parental preference stage, the following criteria (as set out in order below) should be applied;
  - ◆ **Siblings** already at the school, or the eldest child of a family;
  - ◆ **Children of staff** at the school, provided this applies to all staff employed at the school;
  - ◆ **Compelling individual circumstances** ie special considerations for social, welfare or other personal reasons;
  - ◆ **Proximity to the pupil's home** ie those for whom the school is the nearest suitable school.

### UNIFORM CRITERIA

- 6.2 Among the **Education Partners** there was support for the use of uniform criteria from **SELB, WELB, CnaG, UTU, NAHT** and **AHTSS**. However they felt that the Department should consider ways to cater for the particular circumstances in some sectors (eg integrated). It was stated that parents often found it difficult to see the logic in the use of existing criteria by certain schools.
- 6.3 **GBA** stated that the criteria suggested in the Burns Report had no educational merit, even if domestically convenient for parents.
- 6.4 Over 70% of **schools** agreed that all post-primary schools should be required to use the same admissions criteria, although only 20% of grammar schools held this view. Concerns expressed by a small number of schools, in particular from the primary and grammar sectors, were that this proposal would destroy schools' ethos, admissions criteria should be individual to each school and that real choices needed to be

created in order for this process to work. A small number of schools believed that the admissions criteria should only be applied after selection based on ability.

- 6.5 Just over half of the **teachers** who responded to the Household Response Form agreed with the proposal that all schools should have the same admissions criteria.
- 6.6 Most of the **Institutes of Further and Higher Education and Training Organisations** that responded supported the use of uniform criteria across all schools.
- 6.7 **IoD** argued that schools should be allowed to set their own admissions criteria when oversubscribed, and that these criteria should reflect the ethos of the school, be that single sex, Irish-medium or grammar. It considered that unless sufficient places were provided in schools to which parents want to send their children, the need for 'rationing' would remain as before.
- 6.8 **UUP** and **DUP** were opposed to the use of uniform criteria on the grounds that schools should retain the right to set their own criteria in order to maintain their individual ethos and select pupils who best fit what the school has to offer. **SDLP** supported the idea of uniform criteria for all schools, as it would provide a more equitable basis on which to proceed.
- 6.9 A majority of respondents to the **Household Response Form** (57%), including a majority of parents, supported the introduction of common admissions criteria for all post-primary schools. Support was highest among parents with children at secondary schools. This was also the view of a majority (69%) of the sample in the **Omnibus Survey**.
- 6.10 A majority of the **community groups** that responded supported the use of uniform admissions criteria. **NICVA** also agreed, with the proviso that integrated schools and Irish-medium schools would have supplementary criteria specifically relevant to their requirements. **EGSA** and **WEA** agreed with the introduction of standard admissions criteria.
- 6.11 **NIHRC** indicated that some of the proposed admissions criteria were flawed from a human rights perspective and need to be rewritten on the basis of equality and human rights standards. The **Equality Commission** indicated that admissions criteria should be considered at a later date once the structures were clearer. **CAJ** felt that if admissions criteria were to be used, then uniform criteria should apply across all schools.

## PARENTAL PREFERENCE

- 6.12 There was support for parental preference from **SELB, WELB, CnaG, CHA, NASUWT, INTO, UTU** and **AHTSS**. While supporting this criterion, WELB was concerned that in the initial years after changes to post-primary arrangements, parents would still opt for what are perceived as the “best schools” which could result in disappointment for a large number of pupils. SELB considered that grammar schools would continue to be heavily oversubscribed.
- 6.13 **NICIE** also supported the use of parental preference particularly where parents had sent their children to integrated primary schools and wished to continue to educate them in the integrated sector.
- 6.14 **SHANI** disagreed with the use of parental preference, stating that it had been used in the past and failed.
- 6.15 Over 60% of all **schools** responding agreed with the proposal that parental choice should have statutory priority and that all schools should be required to admit pupils in strict order of parental preference. Whilst over 80% of secondary schools and 60% of primary schools agreed with this proposal, just over a third of grammar schools agreed.
- 6.16 Three quarters of **teachers** supported the proposal, although some concerns were raised that it could lead to oversubscribed schools, with parents choosing the socially acceptable school for their children rather than the school that will meet their needs most appropriately.
- 6.17 **TRC** was concerned that priority for parental preference might lead to increased demand at those schools deemed to be successful.
- 6.18 The **Institutes of Further and Higher Education** and **Training Organisations** that responded were evenly divided on the use of parental preference, whilst **CBI** and **IoD** supported its use as long as it was informed by the Pupil Profile.
- 6.19 **UUP, SDLP**, the **Alliance Party** and the **Women’s Coalition** supported the use of parental preference, although UUP considered that this would only be possible over time when the system has developed sufficiently to meet the wishes of parents. It also indicated that it would need to be made clear to parents that a child might have to move if it was evident that he or she

was not suited to the provision of a particular school. **Sinn Féin** felt that, in the context of a non-selective system, parental preference need only extend to the religious ethos or cultural/language characteristics of a school.

- 6.20 The **Civic Forum** supported this criterion but emphasised that the Pupil Profile must be robust enough to enable parents to make informed decisions.
- 6.21 A majority of respondents to the **Household Response Form** (77%) and the **Omnibus Survey** (73%) supported the use of parental preference as an admissions criterion, as did a majority of the **community groups** that responded. A few of the **voluntary groups** that responded registered concerns that parental preference would favour the more informed parents who would choose only socially acceptable schools. This could lead to selection by postcode and favour higher income families.
- 6.22 **NICVA** also supported parental preference but stressed that it needed to be balanced with respect to children's rights. It also considered that some parents might need support to enable them to make informed decisions; a view shared by **EGSA**.
- 6.23 A majority of **pupils** agreed that this criterion should have top priority but argued that the pupil's preference should also be recognised. Post-primary pupils believed that if this was the main criterion, grammar schools would always be oversubscribed.
- 6.24 **NIHRC** and the **Equality Commission** did not agree that parental choice should be given statutory priority for admissions purposes. NIHRC suggested that its statutory basis should be limited to the type of school. In addition, both NIHRC and the Equality Commission felt that parental choice is more likely to advantage parents from higher socio-economic backgrounds who had the knowledge, literacy and confidence to make informed choices. The **Children's Law Centre** also disagreed that parental preference should have an absolute authority, as in their view parental preference might not always be in the best interests of the child. This view was also shared by the **UN Rapporteur on the Right to Education** who stressed that sometimes there is conflict between the rights of the child and parental choice. Solutions have to be discussed and clearly articulated.

## SIBLINGS OR ELDEST CHILD

- 6.25 There was general support from the **Education Partners** for the siblings or eldest child criterion although concern was raised that the eldest child criterion should also be applied when the child was the eldest boy or girl, where the older sibling was of the opposite sex. **SELB** viewed this criterion as unfair as it could disadvantage children whose siblings were not previously accepted by a grammar school.
- 6.26 This criterion attracted majority support from **schools** and **teachers**, although a small number of schools were concerned that it may be discriminatory, creating an unfair advantage for some children.
- 6.27 All of the **Institutes of Further and Higher Education** and most of the **Training Organisations** that responded supported the use of this criterion.
- 6.28 **SDLP** supported the use of this criterion, as children from the same family would have the opportunity to be admitted to the same school. The **Alliance Party** felt that it was a reasonable and practical consideration when distributing places and in the long-term was likely to be socio-economically neutral. However, in the short-term the current socio-economic disparity within the school system may be maintained and perpetuated by the use of the sibling criterion. The **Civic Forum** felt that this criterion should not be a major factor in the transfer process. **NICVA** and most of the **community groups** who responded agreed with the use of this criterion.
- 6.29 A majority of respondents to the **Household Response Form** (68%), including a majority of parents, supported the use of this criterion, with support higher among parents with children of school age and parents with children at secondary schools. A minority (28%) opposed the criterion.
- 6.30 In contrast, a majority of **pupils** were opposed to this criterion as they felt it would lead to unfavourable comparisons with siblings, reduce individuality and create an unfair advantage for some families. Another concern was that the school attended by an older sibling might not be the most appropriate for a younger brother/sister.
- 6.31 **NIHRC** felt that this criterion could be discriminatory as long as all schools were not equal. **CAJ** and the **Children's Law Centre** also felt this criterion was unfair.

## CHILDREN OF STAFF AT THE SCHOOL

- 6.32 A majority of those who responded to the consultation opposed the use of this criterion on the grounds that it gave an unfair advantage to the children of those working at schools. **SELB** regarded this criterion as discriminatory, **TRC** felt it set aside the principle of valuing all young people equally and **UTU** also disagreed with its use. **WELB** and **CnaG** supported this criterion provided that children of all staff employed by the school had equal status. **WELB** also expressed concern about equality of opportunity for pupils whose parents were unemployed.
- 6.33 Almost two thirds of **schools** supported this criterion, with greater support in post-primary schools. Of those opposed to the criterion, some viewed it as discriminatory, creating an unfair advantage for some children and therefore contrary to the principle of valuing all children equally. In contrast, over half of the **teachers** who responded to the Household Response Form were opposed to the use of this criterion.
- 6.34 Half of the **Institutes of Further and Higher Education** and a third of **Training Organisations** that responded agreed with the use of this criterion.
- 6.35 The **Alliance Party** opposed the use of this criterion on the basis that it discriminated against some children.
- 6.36 A majority of respondents to the **Household Response Form** (67%), including a majority of parents, opposed the use of this criterion, as did nearly all **pupils**.
- 6.37 **NICVA** supported this criterion, providing it applied to all staff. However, a majority of **community groups**, **NIPSA**, and the **Civic Forum** were opposed to this criterion, as were **NIHRC**, **CAJ** and the **Children's Law Centre**, who considered that it was discriminatory.

## COMPELLING INDIVIDUAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- 6.38 Concerns were expressed by **NICIE**, **SHANI**, **SDLP**, **UTU** and **NICVA** that this criterion could be abused and that robust criteria would have to be defined. Some suggested that the Department should draw up clear guidelines indicating the circumstances when it could be applied. **INTO** expressed the view that this criterion could be a potential legal minefield. **CnaG** supported the use of this criterion.

- 6.39 Two thirds of **schools** supported the use of this criterion. Some schools felt that clear guidelines would be needed to ensure that it was not subject to abuse; others suggested some form of central control or adjudication to ensure consistency in application across all schools.
- 6.40 Almost all **the Institutes of Further and Higher Education and Training Organisations** supported the use of this criterion.
- 6.41 A majority of respondents (57%) to the **Household Response Form**, including a majority of parents, supported the use of this criterion. Support was highest among parents with children at secondary schools. A significant minority of respondents (30%), including a significant minority of parents, were opposed. This was also the view from the **Omnibus Survey**.
- 6.42 A significant minority of **post-primary pupils** felt that individual circumstances should be taken into account to help the decision-making process and meet specific pupils' needs. The main concern was that the system would be open to abuse.
- 6.43 **Community groups** also held the view that the system might be open to abuse, as did **NIHRC**, which stated that this criterion would have to be well regulated and decisions made by a central body to prevent abuse. The **Children's Law Centre** viewed this criterion as sensible but in need of statutory safeguards.

### **PROXIMITY TO THE PUPIL'S HOME**

- 6.44 The criterion of proximity or distance from school attracted greatest comment. **NEELB, WELB, SELB, CHA** and **SHANI** were opposed to the use of proximity because, they argued, its use could potentially disadvantage rural communities, adversely impact on disadvantaged areas, favour higher income families and result in selection by postcode.
- 6.45 **WELB, NICIE, CnaG, INTO, UTU** and **CHA** preferred a form of random selection in place of proximity. A lottery system was considered to be fairer as everyone had an equal chance of obtaining a place in any particular school.
- 6.46 **NICIE** also proposed that the criterion should make provision for the integrated sector as integrated schools usually draw from a very wide catchment area.

- 6.47 **TRC** was not in favour of using this criterion as it considered that admission mainly by proximity would rule out the traditional large catchment areas of both urban and rural schools.
- 6.48 More than half of **schools** (53%) opposed the use of proximity to the pupil's home as an admissions criterion. Whilst more than 70% of responses from secondary schools supported the use of this criterion, less than 20% of grammar schools did so. Less than half of primary schools supported the criterion, while slightly more **teachers** (49%) supported this criterion than opposed it (44%).
- 6.49 The most frequently expressed concerns from schools were that it would disadvantage pupils from rural communities, lead to 'selection by postcode' thereby creating an advantage for higher income families who could afford to move house to suit their choice of school, limit choice and fail to match pupils' needs to schools.
- 6.50 The majority of **Institutes of Further and Higher Education** and **Training Organisations** that responded agreed with the use of this criterion.
- 6.51 **UUP** considered that individual schools should be free to use distance as a criterion if they so wished but they should not be obliged to do so. **SDLP** supported the use of proximity, as did **Sinn Féin** in the context of all ability schools. However, if schools were to offer different pathways, **SDLP** preferred a lottery system. The **Alliance Party** opposed this criterion as it would not fulfil its criterion of being socio-economically neutral.
- 6.52 The 4 **District Councils** that responded and the **Civic Forum** expressed concern that the use of proximity as a criterion could lead to selection by post-code. This could be socially divisive and create advantage for the higher income families who could afford to move home.
- 6.53 A majority of respondents to the **Household Response Form** (52%), including a majority of parents, supported the use of proximity. This was also the view from the **Omnibus Survey**. Support was highest among parents with children at secondary school and lowest among parents of children at grammar school.

- 6.54 **Community groups** agreed that distance from school could be used although some raised concerns that it might favour higher income families. Rural communities argued that this criterion would disadvantage rural children and both the **Rural Development Council (RDC)** and **UFU** suggested that it should be replaced by random selection. **NICVA** recommended that this criterion be removed and replaced with a random selection system as the fairest option in the event of over-subscription.
- 6.55 **Pupils** were evenly split about the use of distance from school as a criterion. Those in favour of this criterion argued that it would reduce the amount of time spent travelling. Those opposed to the criterion felt it would limit choice and create an unfair advantage for higher income families who could afford to move nearer their preferred school. They believed that everyone should have an equal chance to go to the school of their choice.
- 6.56 **NIHRC** considered that this criterion was unfair and was concerned that in some circumstances the nearest school may not be the most appropriate to satisfy a child's right to an effective education. **CAJ** considered that this criterion was discriminatory, as it would disadvantage children in rural communities.

## ORDER OF ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

- 6.57 Less than half of **schools** agreed with the application of the admissions criteria in the suggested order. A few schools felt that post-primary schools should be free to decide their own admissions criteria. A minority of schools, particularly in the grammar sector, argued that to impose standard admissions criteria in a set order on schools would ruin the individuality and ethos of schools.

## OTHER COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR OTHER ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

- 6.58 **SEELB** and **CCMS** indicated that admissions criteria should be considered at a later date once the future structures were clearer and **CHA** suggested that parents should be involved in discussions about the criteria in their local areas. **CCEA** suggested that criteria should be educationally based in the interim.

- 6.59 **BELB** considered that, where criteria are used to inform the transfer of young people to post-primary education, they must centre on their educational needs and not just on their abilities.
- 6.60 **NICIE** argued that integrated schools must have the right to maintain religious balance by continuing to apply admissions criteria to groups of applicants from both main traditions. They also considered that integrated schools must have the right to give preference to children coming from integrated primary schools.
- 6.61 **AHTSS** and **NAHT** recommended the establishment of an education commission to develop a suitable set of criteria to deal with ‘over-subscription’. They also suggested as one possible criterion, the notion of ‘designated contributory primary school’.
- 6.62 A small number of **schools**, mostly primary schools, suggested the use of a lottery or random allocation criterion as the fairest and most objective way of allocating places. Other suggestions for admissions criteria included using the Pupil Profile, parents who are past pupils, age of pupil, siblings previously at the school and preferred feeder primary schools. Within the integrated sector, a number of schools suggested that admissions criteria should include religion to enable integrated schools to maintain religious balance, and also attendance at an integrated primary school. The Irish-medium sector indicated that proficiency in the Irish language was important, particularly at post-primary level.
- 6.63 **IoD** indicated that popular schools should be allowed to expand, which would afford parents the choice of their preferred school.
- 6.64 **DUP** suggested that schools that wished to promote a strong academic ethos should admit only those pupils who could benefit from the provision offered by the schools, but not admit other pupils just to fill up the numbers. The **Alliance Party** recommended that, instead of proximity, remaining places in a school would be allocated on a random basis.
- 6.65 **Sinn Féin** advocated a system of catchment areas to be used at post-primary level, similar to the parish system in use for maintained primary schools. **SDLP** saw merit in the notion of a lottery to allocate places in the context of the Burns proposal to retain distinct pathways. The **Women’s Coalition** argued that whatever criterion was chosen as the tiebreaker in

oversubscribed schools should be fair, objective and transparent and suggested a form of random selection or lottery.

- 6.66 **Pupils** did not agree on any one approach. Random allocation was seen as a fair method and it was also felt that academic performance should be included in the admissions criteria to help inform the school about a pupil's ability.
- 6.67 **NIHRC** suggested that catchment areas could be used to allocate places. Priority should also be given to the socially disadvantaged as already happens in nursery schools.

## CHAPTER 7 - COLLEGIATES

- 7.1 **The Burns proposal** was for the creation of local collaborative networks of schools in a system of 20 Collegiates. The Collegiates would consist of a variety of schools, representing different management types, working together to provide the widest possible choice of educational opportunities for all pupils.
- 7.2 Among the **Education and Library Boards** there was a common view that whilst collaboration and co-operation should be encouraged among schools, the Review Body's proposals were not the best way of achieving this aim. They considered that clusters of schools co-operating or collaborating or otherwise working in partnership should grow from voluntary participation and/or existing partnership arrangements to suit local circumstances.
- 7.3 The 5 Boards expressed a clear view that initial funding and support should be made available to provide incentives to schools to take part in such arrangements. Views were mixed on whether participation in the arrangements should remain voluntary or become more formalised after a period of time.
- 7.4 **CCMS** considered that the objectives underpinning the concept of Collegiates were laudable and desirable, but that the proposals as currently framed were unmanageable for a number of reasons including issues relating to governance and management, trusteeship and ethos, and funding and employment. It argued that the notion of voluntary collaboration lacks stability and would not address the issue of competition and market forces that the Collegiate proposals were designed to overcome.
- 7.5 **NICIE** believed that a system based on collaboration rather than competition reflects more accurately the aspirations of a post-conflict society, although it had some concerns about the impact on rural areas and the lack of an integrated post-primary school in 6 of the proposed Collegiates.
- 7.6 **CnaG** agreed with the rationale behind the Collegiate structure but had concerns that the benefits would not be delivered to children in Irish-medium education. It recommended the establishment of a separate Collegiate for Irish-medium education and that all Irish-medium schools would have dual membership of a geographical Collegiate and the Irish-medium Collegiate.

- 7.7 **CCEA** supported the principle of co-operation among schools and saw the Collegiate proposal as innovative. However, the Council felt that the Collegiates as envisaged by the Review Body, would be ineffective because of the basic conflict between schools as autonomous units and the interests of the Collegiates, within the current funding mechanism which creates competition between schools.
- 7.8 The 5 main Teachers' Unions (**ATL, INTO, NAHT, NASUWT, UTU**) supported the principle of co-operation and collaboration among schools, but raised concerns about whether the Burns proposal to establish Collegiates was the best way of achieving it. Concerns included the perceived bureaucracy involved in the proposed structures, the size and geography of the individual Collegiates, practical issues such as transport and timetabling, the current funding arrangements, staffing issues and the omission of special schools and Institutes of Further and Higher Education from the proposed structures.
- 7.9 **GBA**, whilst accepting the need for co-operation among schools, was opposed to the Collegiate system, citing practical difficulties such as child protection, insurance cover, teaching through ICT and the safety and supervision of pupils in transit. It also had concerns regarding the reduced role of Governors and Trustees within the proposed structures.
- 7.10 **CHA** considered that profiling and curricular change would be more effective if collaborative arrangements were developed at local level, with Trustees and Boards of Governors actively involved in shaping the arrangements and ensuring that schools' distinctive ethos, philosophy and values were promoted and developed.
- 7.11 **SHANI** argued that while the concepts of co-operation and collaboration were commonly agreed, the imposition of a statutory structure was not. It considered the structure of each Collegiate to be unwieldy and the functions to go well beyond what was possible.
- 7.12 **AHTSS** welcomed the intention to create a framework of local schools working in partnership and in a spirit of co-operation, but considered that although the Collegiate system as proposed has much to commend it, it required refinement. It supported the proposal that public funding should cease if a school decided not to take part in the new arrangements.

- 7.13 A majority of **schools** (58%) disagreed with the proposal that schools should work in partnership in a Collegiate structure. Only 4% of grammar schools supported the proposal, along with half of secondary schools and less than half of primary schools.
- 7.14 Schools supporting the proposal commented that Collegiates would provide a broader range of curriculum choices for pupils, enable sharing of resources, expertise and good practice, benefit post-16 provision in particular and eliminate competitiveness between schools. Those not in support expressed the view that the proposed arrangements were too bureaucratic and impractical and would lead to increased costs in administration. Schools were also concerned about the transport costs and safety aspects of the movement of pupils between schools within Collegiates. A substantial minority felt that the establishment of Collegiates would ruin schools' ethos and individuality and there were concerns about Collegiates in rural areas, respondents expressing the view that Collegiates would only work in an urban setting. A small number of schools wanted local solutions to be developed for local areas.
- 7.15 A substantial minority of schools agreed with the need for better co-operation and collaboration, and felt that this should be encouraged on a voluntary basis rather than through the establishment of Collegiates. There was also a call for stronger links to be forged among schools, business and the FE/HE sector and that schools should collaborate, not compete, with the FE sector.
- 7.16 The **Northern Catholic Bishops** considered the Collegiate proposals put forward by the Review Body as unworkable not least because there is no recognition of the rights and role of the Trustees. However, they agreed with the spirit of the proposal, which underlined the need for co-operation among schools in the interests of all pupils and indicated their commitment to actively promoting this co-operation in the Catholic-managed sector. They believed that considerable financial investment from government would be necessary to ensure such collaboration exists among schools which were perceived as having equal status as, in their view, collaboration between unequals would not provide a sound basis for the future.
- 7.17 **TRC** welcomed the concept of co-operation and co-ordination between schools, instead of competition, but viewed the Burns proposal as impractical. It felt it would divert resources from the classroom and suggested that smaller clusters of schools, co-operating on a voluntary basis, would be more realistic.

- 7.18 Most respondents from the **Further and Higher Education** sector welcomed a system that supported greater collaboration among providers. However, the proposed arrangements were considered to be too bureaucratic and impractical. **ANIC** argued that any structural or administrative arrangements for post-16 education provision should take into account the role of Institutes of Further and Higher Education to ensure that the expertise and resources in the sector are made available to all who seek to use it.
- 7.19 **CBI** welcomed the importance of sharing best practice but was concerned that the Collegiate proposals would introduce excessive and complex administration arrangements, with increased costs. It was also concerned about the prescription of the number of Collegiates and the impact of the Review of Public Administration. It suggested a more flexible approach, building on current school linkages and a gradual implementation, combined with regular review and refinement.
- 7.20 **IoD** was concerned about the mandatory nature of the Collegiate system, its practical workings and the bureaucracy involved, but felt there was merit in the concept of greater collaboration among schools as a basis for extending choice and raising standards. Sharing and mutual co-operation already exist and should be extended on a voluntary basis without being a condition of grant-aid.
- 7.21 All of the main **political parties** supported the principle of schools working together in partnership to ensure breadth of curricular provision, extend choices available and maximise the use of resources. However, they expressed concerns about the cost, practicalities and bureaucracy involved in establishing the Collegiates as proposed. None of the main parties agreed with the Burns proposal that a structure of 20 Collegiates should be established, but offered instead their own views as to how schools should co-operate with each other and these are summarised later in the chapter.
- 7.22 **District Councils** felt that the proposed Collegiates would be too bureaucratic and potentially expensive, but supported the desire for informal collaboration among schools. These views were echoed by the **Civic Forum**, which asserted that any collaborative relationships needed to be on a voluntary basis and should take account of the growing role of the Further Education sector in post-14 and post-16 education provision.

- 7.23 The views of the **general public** on the establishment of Collegiates were mixed. Of those adults who responded to the **Household Response Form**, more were opposed (44%) to the proposal to establish Collegiates than in favour (34%), with over a fifth of respondents undecided. However, these opinions differed from those expressed in the **Omnibus Survey**, where almost two thirds supported the establishment of Collegiates.
- 7.24 Views expressed by the general public, including parents, through written submissions and comments on the Household Response Form, highlighted a number of concerns with the proposed Collegiate structure. These included transport and safety issues, the additional cost of the proposals, and the viability of the proposed structures in rural areas. The view was expressed that Collegiates were too bureaucratic, impractical and unworkable, and would ruin the ethos of individual schools.
- 7.25 Responses from representatives of the **community and voluntary sector**, including rural interests, recognised the benefits to be gained through the sharing of resources and expertise among schools, with most community groups which responded supporting the creation of a Collegiate structure and most of the voluntary sector suggesting voluntary collaboration. Concerns were expressed regarding transport costs, costs associated with the development of Collegiates and the failure to include special schools and the Further Education sector.
- 7.26 Respondents stressed that any changes to structures should be introduced slowly to ensure that all the necessary elements are in place and that appropriate transition arrangements are planned carefully.
- 7.27 **NICVA** considered the Collegiate system to be an innovative model worthy of support. It considered that Collegiates had the potential to move post-primary education forward to a less segregated, more effective model that respects choice for parents and pupils. However, it felt that further work was needed on how the system would function in Northern Ireland and raised concerns with regard to community safety, particularly in interface areas.
- 7.28 **The Ad-hoc Consortium of Children's Rights and Disability** considered that the proposal to exclude special schools from the Collegiate structure was almost certainly incompatible with the equality duties imposed by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act, 1998, and was contrary to best educational practice. It believed that if Collegiates were to be established, they must

include all special schools if pupils with special educational needs as a result of significant disabilities were to have a chance to experience a less segregated education. These concerns were echoed by the **Southern Area Children and Young People's Committee**.

- 7.29 **Barnardo's** considered the Collegiate proposal to be a sound idea in principle, but was concerned about the practical issues such as distance between schools, sectarian tensions, and the exclusion of children with special needs.
- 7.30 **WEA** and **EGSA** also considered the principle of Collegiates to be worthwhile, but had concerns about the practicalities of the proposal.
- 7.31 The majority of **young people** (aged 14-19 years) were in favour of the proposal to establish Collegiates. Pupils in favour argued that there would be benefits in sharing resources and expertise and that a Collegiate system might increase integration and understanding between young people from different backgrounds. Those not in favour felt that Collegiates would ruin their schools' ethos, lead to increased costs and have significant transport and safety implications.
- 7.32 The **Equality Commission** supported the establishment of Collegiates and the proposal that participation in the Collegiate system should be a condition of grant-aid, whilst **NIHRC** believed the Collegiate system would help the development of appropriate provision at both junior and senior level within the context of all ability schools. It also identified problems relating to costs, equality of opportunity among Collegiates, travel and safety issues which might militate against the desired outcome of equality of opportunity for all. It felt that special schools should also be included in the Collegiates.
- 7.33 **CAJ** welcomed the collaborative nature of Collegiates but was concerned that the proposal would lead to increased bureaucracy and that special schools were excluded. The **Children's Law Centre** argued that any new structure must promote the active and meaningful participation of children in decisions governing the running of schools and also felt that special schools should be included.
- 7.34 **NIC.ICTU** believed that, if operated effectively, the Collegiate system could make a contribution towards the promotion of tolerance and diversity. However, it had concerns that the proposals may not be realistic and argued that the pooling of

resources and staffing issues would require extensive discussion. It also wished to see linkages with the Further Education sector developed.

- 7.35 **NIPSA** opposed the proposal to establish a Collegiate system on the basis that it was too bureaucratic and would result in a confusion of roles between schools, Institutes of Further and Higher Education and Education and Library Boards.

## **SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVE MODELS TO COLLEGIATES**

- 7.36 A number of alternative models and suggestions for modifications were put forward by respondents and these are summarised below.
- 7.37 **BELB** suggested a managed system of collaborative networks of neighbouring schools, building on existing partnerships, which after an initial development period of 2-3 years and a period of extension and refinement for a further 2-3 years, would develop into collaborative consortia of schools. This would lead to the subsequent development of federations of consortia which would be formalised and, after a period of time, be subject to legislation. The Board's view was that this collaborative system would offer real choice and enhanced ways of learning for young people. The concept of individual schools would become less important in the context of the development of learning communities.
- 7.38 **NEELB** considered that clusters of schools should be established to serve catchment areas defined by the Department in consultation with local interests, including primary schools. The longer-term aim would be that participation in a cluster would become a condition of grant-aid and that multi-campus schools would be developed from a confederation model.
- 7.39 **SELB** suggested smaller groupings of schools including all management types. Special schools and Institutes of Further and Higher Education should also be included and there should be curricular links with primary schools.
- 7.40 **SEELB** suggested that incentives should be provided to schools to encourage locally agreed collaborative arrangements such as clustering.

- 7.41 **WELB** suggested a Northern Ireland framework of collaborating post-primary schools with flexibility to assist the development of local solutions for local areas and to allow schools to develop particular strengths and offer choice. It also suggested that some smaller schools, particularly in rural areas, could be affiliated as satellite schools to larger schools in order to provide a full and diverse curriculum. Institutes of Further and Higher Education should also be involved and post-16 provision in schools and Institutes of Further and Higher Education should be rationalised.
- 7.42 **CCMS** suggested that collaborative arrangements should reflect local circumstances. Where schools are of insufficient size to offer curriculum flexibility, a campus approach should be adopted in discrete geographical areas with different models to reflect local circumstances. Each campus would have a single structure for governance and management. The shape of local arrangements would emerge from local consultations among interested parties.
- 7.43 **CCEA** suggested amalgamating schools to form multi-site institutions or the formation of a small number of schools into federal clusters with strong central management and funding.
- 7.44 **CHA** believed that arrangements should vary from area to area depending on local circumstances. There should be collaboration between primary schools and post-primary schools in each locality and all post-primary schools in a locality should be involved.
- 7.45 **UUP** accepted that it would be useful to have a mechanism for neighbouring schools to liaise with each other. This could be established on a more formal basis where there was mutual agreement among schools in a sector. A factor could be included in formula funding arrangements to encourage co-operation.
- 7.46 **SDLP** wished to see local co-operative networks of schools, which have the support of the community, established under a single management board. Special schools would be included in co-operative networks and Institutes of Further and Higher Education and HE institutions would be involved in a more collaborative approach to post-primary education.
- 7.47 **DUP** considered that some schools in close proximity might collaborate through the provision of joint courses and sharing of facilities.

- 7.48 **Sinn Féin** wished to see an audit of existing provision carried out to ensure equality of provision across all areas, and the establishment of Learning Neighbourhoods which would include local schools from early years to 6<sup>th</sup> form, the nearest third level institutions, youth service, training centres, community education projects and libraries.
- 7.49 The **Alliance Party** advocated a partnership approach to post-primary education providing a greater variety of subjects in a more varied setting and as part of a more diverse student body. The size of partnerships would be carefully managed to ensure flexibility and local Collegiates would replace the Education and Library Boards, the other functions of which should become the responsibility of a single Northern Ireland-wide structure.
- 7.50 **NIHRC** believed that schools within defined catchment areas should be obliged to amalgamate within type to provide local all ability schools to age 14 or preferably age 16 to ensure that children have equal access to an effective education.

## CHAPTER 8 - OTHER ISSUES

### THE CURRICULUM

- 8.1 The **Burns proposal** was to develop education provision centred on learners' needs. The Burns Report said that the Key Stage 3 curriculum should be broad, balanced, relevant and demanding with a common core and a focus on key skills. There should be increased flexibility to allow schools to cater for individual pupil needs and to introduce pupils to the choices available at Key Stage 4 through taster courses. At Key Stage 4 there should be greater breadth and flexibility to provide a wider range of curriculum choices which would allow pupils to follow pathways according to their needs, aptitudes and career aspirations. ICT should have a greater role in teaching and learning and careers education should be developed into a Careers Education and Guidance Service.
- 8.2 **CCEA** considered that its own curriculum proposals would:
- ◆ give greater freedom to schools to tailor the curriculum to suit the needs of individual children;
  - ◆ contain a greater emphasis on skills;
  - ◆ recognise that young people have different strengths and aptitudes and develop in different ways and at different speeds; and
  - ◆ include fast track academic, academic and vocational mix and vocational/technical education provision, where appropriate.
- 8.3 CCEA expected that a shift in balance from a knowledge based curriculum to a more competence based curriculum would lead to changes in teaching and learning styles which would be reflected in methods of assessment. It considered that the success of the curricular changes would depend on there being an appropriate range of highly regarded and equally valued qualifications available to recognise attainment across the range of different pathways. Careers guidance in schools must be accompanied by the best possible careers advice.
- 8.4 A common theme among the submissions from the **Education and Library Boards, CCMS** and **CCEA** was that the Review of Post-Primary Education and the Review of the Curriculum were inextricably linked and should be taken forward in tandem as the

curriculum should influence the shape of future post-primary education systems and structures. The Boards and CCMS generally welcomed curriculum changes designed to cater for learners' needs and parity of esteem for all education pathways. **SEELB** supported a modular approach to learning through a Modular Accreditation System. **WELB** said that the provision of academic and vocational pathways in separate institutions was unlikely to achieve the objective of parity of esteem.

- 8.5 Nearly all **schools** agreed with the Burns proposal on the Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 curriculum.
- 8.6 The **Northern Catholic Bishops** said that a review of the curriculum, at primary and post-primary level, must precede any major structural changes. Curricular change must be centred on promoting equality of opportunity for all children.
- 8.7 **TRC** suggested that a common core curriculum be delivered in all post-primary schools until the end of Key Stage 3 and commented on the need to equip pupils with the values, skills and training to meet the needs of a rapidly changing society.
- 8.8 **CBI** and **IoD** supported the need for a range of curriculum pathways including academic and vocational/technical education at Key Stage 4.
- 8.9 CBI suggested a common core curriculum at Key Stage 3. It also called for the establishment of a set of outcomes for the education system. It believed the skills young people needed for life were the same as those for work - a positive attitude, basic and key skills (literacy, numeracy, communication skills, application of number, ICT, working with others, problem solving, and self-management) and recognised national qualifications - including at least English and maths, science and ICT. It was essential to have a framework of qualifications in place which promoted, enabled and enhanced learning and was readily understood by individuals and by employers.
- 8.10 **IoD** suggested a compulsory, but narrow, core curriculum at Key Stage 3, while the provision of other subjects would vary depending on whether the school favours a more academic or vocational bias. It stated that if the reformulation of GNVQs as Vocational GCSEs and Vocational A levels did not lead to a system of qualifications of equal value, Northern Ireland should proceed to develop its own proposals.

- 8.11 **UUP** said that the curriculum in many schools was too prescriptive and there needed to be a greater diversity of education including a greater emphasis on vocational and technical aspects of the curriculum in all post-primary schools.
- 8.12 **SDLP** welcomed the proposal for a core curriculum at Key Stage 3 and advocated that from Key Stage 4 onwards every child should be entitled to choose from a range of academic and vocational subjects in whichever school they attended.
- 8.13 **DUP** stated that the curriculum at post-primary level should be relevant to the needs of society and the abilities and aptitudes of the young people. It should also allow for changes in direction and should carry equal esteem in terms of resources and the value of the course and its outcomes.
- 8.14 **Sinn Féin** considered that there should be cross-referencing between the 2 reviews. It also considered that all children should follow a broad curriculum including a balance of academic, technical and vocational elements, learning skills and personal and social development. It supported a modular approach to learning at Key Stage 4 and post-16.
- 8.15 The **Alliance Party** and the **Women's Coalition** considered that the Review of Post-Primary Education and the Review of the Curriculum should be considered together.
- 8.16 The Alliance Party supported a common curriculum at Key Stage 3 with diversity at Key Stage 4 offering a range of specialist options with distinct technical, vocational and academic choices. At age 16+, examinations should be offered as a range of modules and pupils should be free to mix and match vocational and academic routes or to follow distinctly differentiated academic and vocational routes.
- 8.17 The Women's Coalition said that the concept of educational and career paths progression required unified assessment and accreditation (as is proposed in Scotland) as well as parity of esteem and matching of qualifications. It also commented that employers appeared to have difficulty in recognising and valuing many of the new qualifications.
- 8.18 There was support from the **general public**, including parents, for curriculum choices to be available to all pupils and there was support from the **voluntary sector** for a broad and flexible curriculum designed to meet learners' needs.

- 8.19 **Young people** were of the opinion that the curriculum needed to reflect their interests. Many liked the idea of a common curriculum during Key Stage 3. They felt the curriculum should help to prepare them more for life and the real world, that they should have the same opportunities and that they should have a say in what is taught.
- 8.20 The **Equality Commission** supported the view that all young people should have access to education provision that meets their individual needs and promotes equality of opportunity and high quality learning and teaching. **NIHRC** quoted the UN's Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which stated that 'Secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means'.
- 8.21 **The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education** stressed that applying the entire international human rights framework to the Review reinforces the links between the right to education and all other human rights and individual freedoms.
- 8.22 **CAS** supported the development of unified curricula and examination systems in line with the international trend rather than the English National Qualification Framework based on separate, 2-track, academic and vocational curricula. **Education Reform 21** also supported a unified approach to the curriculum and examinations.

## IMPLEMENTATION

- 8.23 The **Burns proposal** was that there would be 4 phases of implementation. In phase 1 the Transfer Tests would be abolished, transitional arrangements would be in place for use in the 2004 transfer process and shadow Collegiates established. Phase 2 would involve the curriculum changes, phase 3, the establishment of formal Collegiates and phase 4, a review of the arrangements after the establishment of Collegiates.
- 8.24 The **Education and Library Boards** and **CCEA** considered the timescale for change proposed by Burns to be optimistic. **NEELB** said that the timescale had caused concern among many parents. **SELB** asked for an early decision on when the process of change would start in order to remove the uncertainty surrounding the end date of the Transfer Tests.

- 8.25 There was widespread support among the respondents for a gradual process of change to protect the interests of existing pupils and to allow time for schools, teachers and parents to adjust and for change to be managed successfully while retaining the strengths of the existing system. NEELB also said that it is in the interests of all that the pace of change is such that a revised system of education is established within a reasonable time scale.

## FINANCE

- 8.26 The **Burns proposal** was that there would be additional recurrent costs of £2.7million associated with the implementation of its proposals and the need for additional capital costs of £45million to support improvements in the standard of accommodation and facilities of some secondary schools.
- 8.27 The **Education and Library Boards** considered that there was a need for additional resources for changes to be successful and to ensure high quality provision was accessible by all. Both primary and post-primary schools would need additional funds to support future changes including curriculum changes and the development and implementation of the Pupil Profile. There should be additional funds to support teachers and senior managers of schools and encourage extended forms of co-operation among post-primary schools. **SEELB** pointed out that a modular accreditation system across all stages of education would have resource implications. **NEELB** recommended that the Department should undertake a proper economic appraisal and that any new arrangements should ensure that the maximum amount of funds was directed to the classroom.
- 8.28 There was support from the **Education Partners** for investment in capital improvement including a programme of refurbishment to rectify shortcomings in facilities and equipment in secondary schools and an enhanced programme of capital development.
- 8.29 There were calls from nearly all **political parties** for more resources to target social and educational disadvantage. This included investment in nursery and early years interventions, support for teaching and learning in primary schools, especially in socially deprived areas, more effective targeting of social need and investment in vocational curriculum development for 14-18 year olds.

- 8.30 The Education and Library Boards and other Education Partners expressed concerns about the current LMS arrangements and the revised formula funding arrangements for schools and argued that these would need to be re-examined in the context of new proposals for post-primary arrangements.
- 8.31 **CCMS** said that there would be merit in allowing all post-primary schools the same level of delegation as currently enjoyed by voluntary grammar and grant-maintained integrated schools.
- 8.32 **UUP** and **DUP** expressed the view that there should be equity of funding for all schools.
- 8.33 The **Women's Coalition** supported strong incentives to promote opportunities for young people from different community backgrounds to learn together.

## **TEACHERS**

- 8.34 The **Burns Report** recognised the importance of the role of teachers.
- 8.35 There was recognition among **Education Partners** and other respondents that the quality of the teaching force was one of Northern Ireland's greatest strengths. They stressed that changes must be communicated effectively to teachers and opportunities provided for retraining and professional staff development. The proposed curriculum changes would require significant training and support for teachers as education moves increasingly towards a competence-led curriculum with new approaches to teaching and learning. There would also be a need for appropriate support structures for senior management. This should be taken forward in a way which encourages and motivates teachers and reinforces their role as key stakeholders in the system.

**Table 1: Summary of Responses to Key Proposals by Public, Schools and Others**

Question	Household Response Forms (200,551 received)			Omnibus Survey - May & June 2002 (2,200 sample of public)			Detailed Response Booklets* (Total 579) (510 schools, 69 others)		
	Yes	No	Undecided	Yes	No	Undecided	Strongly Agree / Agree	Disagree / Strongly Disagree	%
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Q1. Should the current Transfer Test (11+) be abolished?	57	32	12	54	27	19	87	14	
Q2. Should academic selection be abolished?	30	64	7	32	54	14	63	37	
Q3. Should Pupil Profiles be developed to help parents express a preference for an appropriate post-primary school for their child?	77	14	9	76	10	14	91	9	
Q4. Should all schools be required to use the same admissions criteria to admit pupils?	57	37	6	69	21	10	73	27	
Q5. Should the following admissions criteria be used to decide who should be admitted to post-primary schools?									
(i) Parental preference	77	19	5	73	19	8	63	38	
(ii) Brother or sister already attending or eldest child	68	28	5	66	28	6	86	14	
(iii) Parent working at the school	24	67	9	24	70	7	59	41	
(iv) Compelling individual circumstances	57	30	14	69	18	14	68	32	
(v) Distance of the school from the child's home?	52	43	5	67	28	6	50	50	
Q6. Should Collegiates be established as recommended by Burns?	33	44	22	62	18	20	45	55	

\* Detailed Response Booklets were sent to all schools, Institutes of Further and Higher Education, and a range of Training Organisations and Community Groups.

**Note:** Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding

**Table 2: Household Responses: Further Analysis of Parents' and Teachers' Responses**

Question	Household Response Forms						Omnibus Survey					
	All Responses		Parents		Teachers		All Responses		Parents			
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Q1. Should the current Transfer Test (11+) be abolished?	57	32	58	31	64	25	54	27	56	25	25	25
Q2. Should academic selection be abolished?	30	64	30	63	32	62	32	54	33	52	52	52
Q3. Should Pupil Profiles be developed to help parents express a preference for an appropriate post-primary school for their child?	77	14	78	13	73	16	76	10	78	9	9	9
Q4. Should all schools be required to use the same admissions criteria to admit pupils?	57	37	59	35	51	42	69	21	70	21	21	21
Q5. Should the following admissions criteria be used to decide who should be admitted to post-primary schools?												
(i) Parental preference	77	19	78	17	76	18	73	19	78	15	15	15
(ii) Brother or sister already attending or eldest child	68	28	70	26	72	23	66	28	72	23	23	23
(iii) Parent working at the school	24	67	24	67	37	54	24	70	26	68	68	68
(iv) Compelling individual circumstances	57	30	57	30	61	25	69	18	70	17	17	17
(v) Distance of the school from the child's home?	52	43	53	42	49	44	67	28	68	26	26	26
Q6. Should Collegiates be established as recommended by Burns?	34	44	35	44	28	51	62	18	61	20	20	20

**Notes -** Responses to questions were yes, no or undecided. Figures will not add to 100%, as some respondents were undecided. There were 200,551 responses to the Household Response Form, including 162,000 parents and 21,000 teachers. The Omnibus Survey is based on a sample of 2,200 households including 1,362 parents.

Table 3: School Responses (from Detailed Response Booklets)

	All Schools (510)		Grammar Schools (58)		Secondary Schools (101)		Primary Schools (335)	
	Strongly Agree / Agree	Disagree / Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree / Agree	Disagree / Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree / Agree	Disagree / Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree / Agree	Disagree / Strongly Disagree
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Burns Proposal</b>								
The Transfer Test should cease to be used to select pupils for post-primary education at the earliest possible opportunity	86	14	64	36	98	2	86	14
Transfer to post-primary school should continue to take place at age 11	86	14	95	5	95	5	83	17
Post-primary schools should not select pupils for transfer from primary education on the basis of academic ability i.e. by external testing or teacher evaluation	62	38	9	91	93	7	60	40
A Pupil Profile should be developed for use throughout Key Stages 2 and 3 and beyond, to provide a broader picture of each child's attributes, aptitudes, progress and developmental needs	91	9	98	2	100	0	87	13
The Pupil Profile should not be used by post-primary schools to decide which pupils should be admitted	63	37	7	93	93	7	63	37
All post-primary schools should be required to use the same criteria to decide which pupils to admit if they have more applications than places	71	29	20	80	87	13	75	26
Parental choice should have statutory priority and all schools should be required to admit pupils in strict order of parental preferences	62	38	35	65	84	16	60	40
When schools are oversubscribed, the following admissions criteria should be used:-								
(i) Siblings already at school, or eldest child of a family	88	13	86	14	91	9	87	14
(ii) Children of staff at the school	62	39	75	26	71	29	57	43
(iii) Compelling individual circumstances	66	35	66	34	62	38	66	34
(iv) Proximity to the pupil's home	47	53	18	82	72	28	43	57
The admissions criteria should be used in the order listed above	45	55	22	78	57	43	46	54
Schools should work in partnership in a Collegiate structure to provide the widest possible choice of opportunities for all pupils	42	58	4	96	50	51	46	55

**Notes** - Figures for "all schools" also include responses from 9 Nursery Schools and 7 Special Schools.  
- Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding

## Summary of Additional Comments from the Household Response Forms

Respondents to the Household Response Form were given the opportunity to include additional comments with their forms as well as responding to the specific questions on the Burns proposals. A total of 45,000 respondents took the opportunity to comment on the additional sheet provided, representing 22% of Household Response Forms returned, or 4% of the adult population.

A list of the most frequently expressed comments on each of the Burns proposals is provided below. None of the comments listed below were raised by any more than 15% of the 45,000 respondents (less than 1% of the adult population).

### Transfer Test

- ◆ Don't change until a better alternative is in place.
- ◆ The current Transfer Test causes stress and trauma.
- ◆ Use continuous assessment as an alternative.
- ◆ Test pupils at age 14 rather than age 11.

### Academic Selection

- ◆ We have the best results and change will result in lower standards.
- ◆ Pupils need different pathways including academic and vocational routes.
- ◆ Use the Dickson Plan.
- ◆ Improve secondary schools and leave grammar schools alone.

### Pupil Profile

- ◆ Should be used as part of the selection process.
- ◆ Open to abuse/subjective.

### **Admissions Criteria**

- ◆ Should be individual to each school.
- ◆ Distance criterion disadvantages rural communities.

### **Collegiates**

- ◆ Impractical/unworkable/unrealistic.
- ◆ Too bureaucratic.
- ◆ Will lead to increased costs.
- ◆ Raises transport and safety concerns.

### **Other Issues**

- ◆ Fear of ending up with the same problems as England.

## Summary of Additional Comments from the Detailed Response Booklets

Additional pages were attached to the Detailed Response Booklets to enable respondents to provide comments on the full range of issues covered in the Burns Report. The number of respondents providing additional comments varied across the range of issues. None of the comments listed below were raised by any more than 15% (39) of the 579 respondents.

The most frequently expressed comments were as follows:

### Transfer Test

- ◆ Don't change until a better alternative is in place.
- ◆ The Tests cause stress and trauma.
- ◆ Test pupils at age 14 instead of age 11.
- ◆ The Tests distort the curriculum.
- ◆ The Tests label children as failures.
- ◆ Age 11 is too young to test pupils.

### Academic Selection

- ◆ Use the Dickson Plan.
- ◆ All children should be helped to develop to their full potential.
- ◆ Every child has mixed abilities.
- ◆ Less able pupils suffer in mixed ability classes.
- ◆ Use Pupil Profiles to select pupils for post-primary schools.
- ◆ Change needs to be planned over time.

### Pupil Profile

- ◆ Should be developed as long as it is not used for selection.
- ◆ Will create more work for teachers.
- ◆ Should be used as part of the selection process.

- ◆ Gives an holistic assessment of a pupil.
- ◆ Needs to be standard across all schools and moderated.

### **Same Admissions Criteria for All Schools**

- ◆ Should be individual to each school.
- ◆ Will destroy schools' ethos.
- ◆ Need to create real choice before it will work.

### **Parental Preference**

- ◆ Will lead to oversubscribed schools.
- ◆ Parents have a right to choose.
- ◆ Parents cannot be objective.
- ◆ Parents will choose socially acceptable schools.

### **Siblings**

- ◆ Fair and acceptable.

### **Children of Staff**

- ◆ Creates an unfair advantage for some pupils.

### **Individual Circumstances**

- ◆ Open to abuse.
- ◆ Needs to be clearly defined.
- ◆ Too vague.
- ◆ Need central control/adjudication.

### **Distance from School**

- ◆ Disadvantages rural communities.
- ◆ Will result in selection by postcode.
- ◆ Creates advantage for higher income families.
- ◆ Limits choice.

## Other Suggestions for Admissions Criteria

- ◆ Lottery/random selection.
- ◆ Religion to enable integrated schools to maintain balance.
- ◆ Attendance at an integrated primary for integrated post-primary school.

## Collegiates

- ◆ Impractical/unworkable/unrealistic.
- ◆ Too bureaucratic.
- ◆ Better co-operation/collaboration rather than Collegiates.
- ◆ Transport and safety issues are a concern.
- ◆ Will lead to increased costs or divert funding from the classroom.
- ◆ Will ruin schools' ethos and individuality.

## Curriculum

- ◆ Review curriculum before changing structures.
- ◆ Need flexibility in curriculum provision.
- ◆ Curriculum should allow for the development of a range of pathways.
- ◆ Proposals will provide a wider range of curriculum choices.
- ◆ Need parity of esteem for academic and vocational courses.

## Implementation

- ◆ Need careful planning.
- ◆ Don't change system until a viable alternative is available.
- ◆ Put the needs of children first.
- ◆ Change is essential.
- ◆ Timescale must be realistic.

## **Teacher Training**

- ◆ Adequate funding is needed for training.
- ◆ ELBs/DE should do staff training.

## **Further/Higher Education**

- ◆ Schools should collaborate, not compete, with the FE sector.
- ◆ Stronger links should be forged among schools, business and 3<sup>rd</sup> level education.

## **Transport**

- ◆ Transport should be provided for pupils to attend most suitable school whether inside or outside of a Collegiate area.
- ◆ Transport costs should only be available within local arrangements.
- ◆ Imposing restrictions on transport costs limits parental choice.

## Details of the Strands to the Consultation

### 1. Detailed Response Booklet

A Detailed Response Booklet was issued at the end of April 2002 to schools, Institutes of Further and Higher Education, Community Groups and Training Organisations. The aim was to facilitate consideration of the key issues and to help structure responses. The booklet contained a series of questions with tick box responses to each of the recommendations contained in the Burns Report and provided additional pages for written responses. Details of the number of booklets issued and received from each sector are set out in the table below.

Sector	Number of Booklets Issued	Number of Booklets Returned	Response Rate
Nursery Schools	97	9	9%
Primary Schools	898	335	37%
Secondary Schools	164	101	62%
Grammar Schools	71	58	82%
Special Schools	51	7	14%
<b>All Schools</b>	<b>1,281</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>40%</b>
Institutes of Further and Higher Education	17	10	59%
Community Groups	1,100	43	4%
Training Organisations	105	16	15%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,503</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>23%</b>

## 2. Household Response Form

The Household Response Form sought the views of the public on the main Burns proposals. Each household in Northern Ireland (683,853) was sent 2 response forms asking a series of questions on the main Burns proposals. In addition, information on the Burns proposals and the research findings that underpin the review were enclosed. Only adults aged 18 and over were eligible to complete the forms. Additional colour coded forms were issued on request after a validation check on the number of adults in the household.

A total of 200,551 forms were returned. This represents 16% of the 1.2 million adult population in Northern Ireland.

The characteristics of the 200,551 respondents were as follows:-

44%	Male
56%	Female
6%	Aged 18-25
33%	Aged 26-39
32%	Aged 40-54
14%	Aged 55-64
15%	Aged 65 or over
81%	Parents
42%	Parents with children of school age
35%	Parents with children at grammar school or who had attended a grammar school
25%	Parents with children at secondary school or who had attended a secondary school

Responses from the 5 Education and Library Board areas were as follows:-

15%	Belfast
14%	Western
26%	North-Eastern
27%	South-Eastern
18%	Southern

### 3. The Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) was commissioned to include questions from the Household Response Form in the Northern Ireland Omnibus Surveys for May and June 2002.

Northern Ireland Omnibus samples are drawn from the Valuation and Lands Agency list of addresses. In determining the sample to be used the complete list of addresses was stratified into 3 regions – Belfast, East Northern Ireland and West Northern Ireland and a random sample drawn from each. This aims to ensure that the sample is representative of all communities within the population. A total of 2,232 individuals took part in the survey (948 males and 1,284 females).

A total of 2,200 respondents took part in the Omnibus Survey of which:-

43%	Male
58%	Female
11%	Aged 18-25
29%	Aged 26-39
25%	Aged 40-54
13%	Aged 55-64
22%	Aged 65 or over
61%	Parents
29%	Parents with children of school-age
24%	Parents with children at grammar school or who had attended a grammar school
27%	Parents with children at secondary school or who had attended a secondary school

Responses from the 5 Education and Library Board areas were as follows:-

17%	Belfast
16%	Western
24%	North-Eastern
24%	South-Eastern
20%	Southern

#### 4. Research into the Views of Young People (aged 14-19)

The Northern Ireland Youth Forum was commissioned by the Department of Education to undertake an investigation into the views of young people on the recommendations in the Burns Report. The consultation process was facilitated by 2 independent researchers and involved 116 young people in the 14-19 age range. Ten focus groups were held in a range of locations including Bangor, Londonderry, Carrickfergus, Dungannon, Strabane/Omagh and Belfast.

The characteristics of the 116 young people who took part in the focus groups are as follows:-

Male	52%
Female	48%
Secondary	64%
Grammar	36%

## Written Submissions Received During Consultation

### Education Interests:-

1. Association of Head Teachers in Secondary Schools
2. Association of Teachers & Lecturers
3. Belfast Education & Library Board
4. C2K Project Board
5. Campaign Against Selection
6. Catholic Heads Association
7. Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta
8. Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
9. Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment
10. Educational Guidance Service for Adults
11. Education Reform 21
12. Foyle Trust for Integrated Education
13. Governing Bodies Association
14. Integrated Education Fund
15. Irish National Teachers' Organisation
16. Loreto Education Trust Board
17. National Association of Educational Inspectors, Advisers & Consultants
18. National Association of Head Teachers
19. National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers
20. National Association of Teachers' in Further and Higher Education
21. North-Eastern Education & Library Board
22. Northern Ireland Business Education Partnership
23. Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education
24. Regional Training Unit
25. Secondary Heads Association Northern Ireland
26. South-Eastern Education & Library Board
27. Southern Education & Library Board
28. Ulster Teachers' Union
29. Western Education & Library Board
30. Workers' Educational Association (NI)

### **Schools:-**

1. Grammar (41) and 1 petition with 569 signatures
2. Nursery (2)
3. Primary (40)
4. Secondary (28)
5. Special (2)
6. Teachers (44)
7. Belfast Old Instonians Association
8. Coleraine Primary Principals' Group
9. Confederation of Grammar Schools' Former Pupils' Associations.
10. Foyle College Old Boys' Association
11. Greater Belfast Catholic Maintained Post-Primary Principals
12. Non-denominational Grammar School Principals
13. Northern Ireland Voluntary Grammar Schools Bursars' Association
14. St Malachy's College Old Boys' Association

### **Churches:-**

1. Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy
2. Methodist Church in Ireland, Dungannon Circuit
3. Northern Catholic Bishops
4. The Presbytery of Down, Presbyterian Church in Ireland
5. Sisters of St. Clare
6. St Paul's Parish, Lisburn
7. Transferor Representatives' Council

### **Higher/Further Education And Training:-**

1. Association of Northern Ireland Colleges
2. Further Education Principals
3. Institutes of Further and Higher Education (5)
4. Stranmillis University College

### **Business/Industry:-**

1. Confederation of British Industry
2. Institute of Directors
3. Liberty Information Technology Ltd
4. MMM Design and Build Ltd
5. Momentum – The Northern Ireland ICT Federation

6. Moy Park Ltd
7. Film and Television Commission
8. Nortel Networks
9. Northern Ireland Food & Drink Association
10. SHS Sales and Marketing Ltd

#### **Political Representatives:-**

1. Alliance Party
2. Ards Borough Council
3. Banbridge District Council
4. Civic Forum
5. Councillor D.D. Barbour, Coleraine Borough Council
6. Councillor Marsden Fitzsimons, North Down Borough Council
7. Democratic Unionist Party
8. Dr Eric M Culbertson – Mid Ulster, Ulster Unionist Constituency Association
9. Mrs Joan Carson - MLA Fermanagh & South Tyrone
10. Larne Borough Council
11. North Down Borough Council
12. Northern Ireland Women's Coalition
13. Rev Martin Smyth – MP South Belfast
14. Mr Roy Beggs – MP East Antrim
15. Sinn Féin
16. The Workers' Party
17. Social Democratic and Labour Party
18. Ulster Unionist Party

#### **Public and Voluntary/Community Sector:-**

1. Barnardo's (Northern Ireland)
2. British Deaf Association
3. Business in the Community
4. CARE for Northern Ireland
5. Castlereagh Standing Conference of Women's Organisations
6. Community Arts Forum
7. Community Relations in Schools
8. Community Work Education and Training Network
9. Contact Youth
10. Disability Action
11. Down's Syndrome Association
12. Epilepsy Action

13. Evangelical Alliance
14. Farset Community Think Tanks Project
15. Include Youth
16. Mencap in Northern Ireland
17. Milton Park Reading Clinic
18. NI Music Therapy Trust
19. Northern Ireland Women's European Platform
20. Nexus Institute
21. Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
22. One World Centre
23. Parents (464) and 1 petition with 174 signatures
24. Public (542) and 1 petition with 28 signatures
25. Pupils (57) and 1 petition with 522 signatures
26. Rural Development Council
27. Save the Children
28. Soroptimist International of Lurgan
29. South Belfast Partnership Board
30. Southern Area Child Care Partnership
31. Southern Area Children and Young People's Committee
32. The Boys' Brigade
33. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award
34. The Foyle Civic Trust
35. The Rainbow Project
36. The Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster
37. Ulster Farmers' Union
38. Women's Forum for Northern Ireland
39. Youth Action

#### **Human Rights/Equality Interests:-**

1. Children's Law Centre
2. Committee on Administration of Justice
3. Equality Commission
4. Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

#### **Others:-**

1. Cadogan Group
2. Northern Ireland Committee. Irish Congress of Trade Unions
3. Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance
4. United Nations – The Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education

## Minister's Meetings

During the consultation process, the Minister held a series of meetings with key interests to discuss the issues raised by the review. A total of 28 meetings were held (see table below) with groups representing a wide range of interests and views.

Name of Organisation	Date of Meeting
Vice-Chancellors of Queen's University and University of Ulster	19 February 2002
Principals of Institutes of Further and Higher Education	26 February 2002
Progressive Unionist Party	26 March 2002
Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards	8 April 2002
Belfast Partnership Boards	9 April 2002
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	15 April 2002
Teachers' Unions (NASUWT, INTO, UTU, NAHT & ATL)	16 April 2002
Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action	23 April 2002
Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education	24 April 2002
Governing Bodies Association	29 April 2002
Secondary Heads Association Northern Ireland	29 April 2002
Catholic Heads Association	29 April 2002
Minister for Employment and Learning	30 April 2002
Transferor Representatives' Council	30 April 2002
Primary School Principals	7 May 2002
Association of Head Teachers in Secondary Schools	7 May 2002
Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta	20 May 2002
The National Association of Educational Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants	21 May 2002
Northern Ireland Women's Coalition	23 May 2002
Alliance Party	19 June 2002
Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment	19 June 2002
Sinn Féin	24 June 2002
Representatives from the Business Community	24 June 2002
Southern Board Principals	25 June 2002
Rural Groups (UFU, NIAPA, RDC)	25 June 2002
Grammar School Principals	25 June 2002
Social Democratic and Labour Party	3 July 2002
Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission	9 July 2002

## Glossary

<b>AHTSS</b>	Association of Head Teachers in Secondary Schools
<b>ANIC</b>	Association of Northern Ireland Colleges
<b>ATL</b>	Association of Teachers & Lecturers
<b>BELB</b>	Belfast Education & Library Board
<b>CAJ</b>	Committee on the Administration of Justice
<b>CAS</b>	Campaign Against Selection
<b>CBI</b>	Confederation of British Industry
<b>CCEA</b>	Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment
<b>CCMS</b>	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
<b>CHA</b>	Catholic Heads Association
<b>CnaG</b>	Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (Council for Irish-medium Education)
<b>DE</b>	Department of Education
<b>DUP</b>	Democratic Unionist Party
<b>EGSA</b>	Educational Guidance Service for Adults
<b>ELB</b>	Education and Library Board
<b>FE</b>	Further Education
<b>GBA</b>	Governing Bodies Association
<b>GNVQ</b>	General National Vocational Qualification
<b>HE</b>	Higher Education
<b>ICT</b>	Information Computer Technology
<b>IM</b>	Irish-medium
<b>INTO</b>	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
<b>IoD</b>	Institute of Directors
<b>KS3/KS4</b>	Key Stage 3/Key Stage 4

<b>NAEIAC</b>	National Association of Educational Inspectors, Advisers & Consultants
<b>NAHT</b>	National Association of Head Teachers
<b>NASUWT</b>	National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers
<b>NATFHE</b>	National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education
<b>NEELB</b>	North-Eastern Education & Library Board
<b>NIBEP</b>	Northern Ireland Business Education Partnership
<b>NIC.ICTU</b>	Northern Ireland Committee, Irish Congress of Trade Unions
<b>NICIE</b>	Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education
<b>NICVA</b>	Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
<b>NIHRC</b>	Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
<b>NIPSA</b>	Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance
<b>NIWC</b>	Northern Ireland Women's Coalition
<b>PUP</b>	Progressive Unionist Party
<b>SDLP</b>	Social Democratic & Labour Party
<b>SEELB</b>	South-Eastern Education & Library Board
<b>SELB</b>	Southern Education & Library Board
<b>SHANI</b>	Secondary Heads Association Northern Ireland
<b>TRC</b>	Transferor Representatives' Council
<b>UFU</b>	Ulster Farmers' Union
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UTU</b>	Ulster Teachers' Union
<b>UUP</b>	Ulster Unionist Party
<b>WEA</b>	Workers' Educational Association
<b>WELB</b>	Western Education & Library Board

## Definition of Groups for Analysis of Consultation Responses

- (i) **Education Partners**  
ELBs, CCMS, NICIE, CnaG, CCEA, Teachers' Unions, GBA, CHA, SHANI, AHTSS
- (ii) **Schools**
- (iii) **Churches**  
Northern Catholic Bishops, TRC, individual churches
- (iv) **Higher/Further Education and Training**  
Universities, Teacher Training Institutions, Institutes of Further and Higher Education, Training Organisations
- (v) **Business/Industry**  
IoD, CBI, employers
- (vi) **Political Representatives**  
Political Parties, Politicians, District Councils, Civic Forum
- (vii) **Public and Voluntary/Community Sector**  
General public, voluntary organisations, community organisations
- (viii) **Young People**  
Primary and post-primary pupils and young people to age 19
- (ix) **Human Rights/Equality Interests**  
NIHRC, Equality Commission, CAJ, Children's Law Centre
- (x) **Others**  
NIC.ICTU, NIPSA, Cadogan Group, CAS, Education Reform 21, any other organisations

A limited number of copies is available from the  
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