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Professor George Bain
Room 302
Department of Education
Rathgael house
Balloo Road
Bangor
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BT19 7PR

3rd July, 2006

Dear Professor Bain,

I refer to your letter dated 6th June, which was considered by the Executive Committee on Friday last.

It is clear that the Strategic Advisory Group established by a previous Minister had been unable to reach any agreement. Indeed our representatives repeatedly sought details of the financial model for the proposed changes but this was never produced. We are very willing, indeed anxious, to be involved in any discussions which take the financial issues seriously, including the underfunding at school level to which we have repeatedly drawn attention.

The Executive Committee has asked me to arrange a meeting with you and to draw your attention to the present position of our schools, their ownership and management structures.

- 1) All our schools are under **Voluntary** management and there should continue to be such provision in any restructuring of the education service

- 2) Two of our members are Group B Schools and receive no Capital funding from Government.
- 3) In a report, commissioned by the Government some years ago, Consultants stated that the Voluntary Grammar Schools were efficient and cost effective.
- 4) For generations a number of our schools have been integrated in terms of race, colour and creed.
- 4) In relation to funding the Department has not provided sufficient funds to meet the incontrovertible needs of our schools and parents have had to make voluntary contributions to maintain essential services.
- 5) Last year the Minister and her Department removed £2 million from Voluntary Grammar schools budgets to support its priority for Primary Education.
- 6) Many of our schools already operate as "Extended Schools"
- 7) In relation to "social and community well-being", the community of many of our schools has, since their foundation, been Ireland as a whole or Northern Ireland.
- 8) We hope your review will give consideration to the extension of the voluntary model to other schools.

Schools are now on holiday and over the next two months Governors will also be on vacation. However, if you give me a few dates I shall endeavour to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely



John Miskelly
Clerk