

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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For the attention of the Open Enrolment and Transfer Procedure Branch

Secretary  
Department of Education  
Rathgael House  
Balloo Road  
BANGOR  
BT19 7PR

Sir

### **TRANSFER 2010**

I enclose a response from the Southern Education and Library Board to the Department of Education Consultation Document on Transfer 2010: Guidance to Primary School Principals, Post-primary School Boards of Governors and Principals, and Education and Library Boards/Education and Skills Authority on Post-Primary School Admissions for 2010/11 School Year.

The Southern Education and Library Board welcomed the opportunity to respond to the Department of Education consultation document since there are serious implications for parents, primary and post primary schools, as well as for the services provided by Board personnel to schools and parents in respect of this important aspect of a child's education.

The board agreed that it is vital that parents have access to sound advice from all the participants in the process, that parents are aware of the role that they themselves and others have to play in the process, and that the process is transparent and clearly understood by all. The Board is committed to delivering a high quality service to all stakeholders in this area but realises that it cannot do so in isolation. It is therefore imperative that the Department of Education acts swiftly to issue final guidance and ensures that whatever arrangements are necessary are put in place as soon as possible if the new system is to work.

Whilst the board's views on the implications of the guidance are focussed largely on the admission of pupils to Year 8, the uniqueness of the Two Tier System within the Southern Board must also be referenced. The Two Tier System has been in place in the Craigavon area for almost 40 years. At a meeting held with controlled junior and senior high schools, Principals reiterated their support for the system and outlined a number of reasons why the status quo should be retained. The majority views of those present are summarised below:

- the success of the system is evident in the very good outcomes for all children;
- parental contentment with the system can be measured by the small number of appeals in comparison to Year 8 figures;
- the success is also attributable to the degree of trust built up over the years between schools and parents;
- there is an expectation amongst the parents of children in Primary 6 that the two tier system will remain. Furthermore it could be argued that any child already in Year 8 or Year 9 in a junior high school has an 'entitlement' to complete their education in the two tier system i.e. that the senior high schools should not change the methodology for selection of children based largely on the rank order provided by junior high schools; and

- lastly, in the same way that there is the possibility that parents will move their children to schools that prepare them for entrance exams for admission to Year 8, any change to the admission arrangements for the selective schools within the 14+ system could see the parents opting to apply to schools which choose to operate entrance tests at Year 8, consequently impacting on the enrolment of the junior high schools.

The board's response to the consultation document is attached.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

A P Murphy  
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