

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

31 July 2007

RPA WILL IMPROVE EDUCATION – RUANE

Education Minister Caitríona Ruane has told education organisations affected by the Review of Public Administration (RPA) that she will be leading the reforms, which will improve the administration of education.

Speaking to the Chairs of the organisations, the Minister highlighted her commitment to the RPA and said it presents the best way forward for Education and that they must continue to deliver high quality education as the implementation takes place. The Minister had previously advised that the Education and Skills Authority would be set up by April 2009 at the latest.

The Minister said: **“I am convinced that the RPA presents the best way forward for Education. Every child must be valued equally and my aim is to create an excellent education service by releasing more resources for front-line services and providing better education opportunities for all.**

“I realise that there has been uncertainty surrounding the implementation of the RPA and I would now reassure staff of my commitment to keep them fully informed at all stages.”

The Minister emphasised that her Department is focused on implementing the RPA as quickly as possible. She said: **“It is vital that we move forward as swiftly as we can. There is much work that can and must be done to start bringing all the functions together and I have asked Gavin Boyd, Chief Executive designate of the Education and Skills Authority to begin this process. In addition, my Department, will establish working groups to begin the development of new policies in a number of important areas.**

“We are keen to continue working with the existing organisations and it is vital that they all continue to play a full part in supporting and co-operating with us in this important work.

“I realise that the new timetable will mean a longer period of change, but it will be better planned and will result in a smooth transition to the new Education and Skills Authority and ensure continuity of quality services during this period.

“I am confident that you share my vision of an education system that values every child equally, and that plays a crucial role in the development of a shared, tolerant and inclusive society that recognises and celebrates diversity. The RPA is the means to facilitate the realisation of this vision in the interest of all learners.”

NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. The seminar included representatives from:

- * The five Education and Library Boards
- * Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education

- * Integrated Education Fund
 - * General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland
 - * Youth Council For Northern Ireland
 - * Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
 - * Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta
 - * Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaíochta
 - * Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment
 - * Staff Commission for the ELB's
 - * Governing Bodies Association
2. All media enquiries to Department of Education Press Office, 028 91 279 207.
 3. Out of office hours please contact the Duty Press Officer via pager number 07699 715 440 and your call will be returned.
 4. Photographs are available from Brian Morrison Photography, telephone 07710 940115.