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Dear Helen

At our February meeting with the Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards, Will Haire and I discussed upcoming secondment opportunities with ESAIT. These are important opportunities for staff to be involved in shaping the future of the Education Service, and I am particularly keen that as many people as possible have the opportunity to do so.

All of the Chief Executives throughout the sector have encouraged staff, where possible, to avail of these opportunities and I welcome the fact that seven different organisations are represented on the Implementation Team. Chief Executives continue to actively encourage staff to get involved in activities to support the implementation but some have also made it clear that their organisations are facing significant challenges in delivering services at current levels given the pressures of vacancy control.

It is imperative that we plan and create the Education and Skills Authority and take forward the Minister's Convergence Programme. However, the Minister has also made it clear that current services must be maintained for the benefit of all our young people, and the maintenance of the services in the existing organisations must complement the work of moving towards ESA. It will therefore be important to strike an appropriate balance between those pressures and we may have to accept that, in some circumstances, the imperative to maintain existing services may mean that organisations have to decline applications from staff to be released on secondment. We hope that this will only happen in exceptional circumstances.

In light of this it is also very important to re-state that an appointment to the Implementation Team will neither favour nor disadvantage anyone in the process of transfer to the new organisation. Neither will it disadvantage anyone not to have applied to the team.

Yours sincerely



GAVIN BOYD
CHIEF EXECUTIVE (DESIGNATE)