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**GBA Welcomes Westminster Inquiry into Education Funding**

The Governing Bodies Association (GBA) has welcomed the decision by the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee to launch an inquiry into education funding in Northern Ireland. The inquiry is set to examine whether the current levels of funding allocated to education in the Northern Ireland budget are sufficient and realistic to meet the challenges facing the sector.

As the representative for the 50 voluntary grammar schools in Northern Ireland, the GBA is well aware of the financial pressures facing schools and recognises the need for an inquiry into the levels of funding currently being offered to schools.

Terry McDaid, Chairman of the GBA advised, “Since 2010 our schools have experienced real term cuts to education budgets. At the same time, they are facing rising employer costs and inflationary pressures. In addition, a number of schools have to pay an Apprenticeship Levy and almost all schools have to meet further costs associated with changes in minibus requirements.”

A recent survey conducted by the GBA identified the impact of the budget on voluntary grammar schools. The survey showed that 70% of respondents had operated at a deficit for 2017/18. As a consequence of these budgetary pressures there have been 50 teaching and non-teaching redundancies with further redundancies likely if budget pressures aren’t alleviated.

“This inquiry is held at a crucial time for education and for our member schools who have suffered cuts to their budgets since 2010. For the past 18 months there has been no Executive or Assembly to scrutinise education funding. As a result, it is now time to look at how front-line education is currently being funded and how it should be resourced going forward.” Terry McDaid added.

**Ends**

For more information please contact the GBA Office:

**Governing Bodies Association**

 (T) 028 9031 2259

GBA Website - <http://www.gbani.org/>

GBA Twitter – gbani\_jobs