

**CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)**



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## Chairman's Welcome

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Colleagues,

Welcome to the 1st Issue of GBA News for the academic year 2020/21. We hope you have had the opportunity for some rest and are feeling positive about the return to school.

We very much appreciate that these are challenging times and are grateful for the leadership and perseverance that you have shown. The work that you do on behalf of our children and young people is invaluable.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you back to the new school



Please [contact us](#) with any Covid-19 related issues or feedback. We are in regular contact with various stakeholders and will voice any concerns regarding the return to school on your behalf.

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## **Expert Panel on Educational Underachievement Established**

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The Education Minister has announced the appointment of an Expert Panel to examine the links between educational underachievement and social disadvantage.

The panel has been established under the 'New Decade, New Approach' agreement which sets out the requirement for an expert group to examine and address links between persistent educational underachievement and socio-economic background, including the long-standing issues facing working-class Protestant boys.

The panel members are:

- Dr Noel Purdy will Chair the panel. He is currently the Director of Research and Scholarship at Stranmillis University College, where he is also the Director of the Centre for Research in Educational Underachievement.
- Mary Montgomery is currently the Principal of Belfast Boys Model School which has one of the highest levels of attainment for Protestant FSM boys coming from an area of economic deprivation.
- Kathleen O'Hare recently retired as the Principal of Hazelwood Integrated College, and was formerly Principal of St Cecilia's College.
- Joyce Logue is the Principal of Longtower Primary in Derry/Londonderry which predominantly serves a pupil population within areas of significant economic and social deprivation such as the Brandywell and Bogside.

- Jackie Redpath is the Chief Executive of the Greater Shankill Partnership and he has significant and longstanding experience addressing the issue of educational under-achievement, particularly with FSM Protestant Boys within a community setting.
- Professor Feyisa Demie is an Honorary Professor at the School of Education at Durham University and also head of research for school self-evaluation at Lambeth Local Authority in London. He has worked extensively with government departments for over 25 years in the use of data and research to raise educational achievement.

The Panel will engage with organisations which have experience of the issues associated with educational underachievement. This includes parents and children as well as the wider education sector, government, the voluntary and community sector, business representative organisations and the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People.



A subgroup of GBA Executive Members has been created to discuss policy around educational underachievement. If you would like to submit

any feedback on the matter for discussion or would like to be involved on the subgroup, please [let us know](#).

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## **Northern Ireland Assembly - Education Committee Survey**

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The Education Committee has created a short online survey regarding post-primary transfer. You can complete the survey using the this [link](#).

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## **Teaching & Non-Teaching Vacancies**

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GBA provides an advertising service for our Member Schools. The service is free of charge. Job vacancies are posted on our website and Twitter page. There is also a link to our job listings on the Education Authority website in the job opportunities section.

If you would like us to host a vacancy for your school, please [contact us](#), you can use this [template](#) to provide us with the necessary information about the post(s).



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## Email Subscription - Please Share

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If any of your Governors would like to receive our newsletter, please send us their email address. We would also be grateful if you could circulate the monthly updates to your Governors.

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