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## GBA Raises Serious Concerns about Integrated Education Bill

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The GBA has raised serious concerns about the Integrated Education Bill.

If enacted, this Bill will create significant disparities in terms of levels of support, resourcing, training, and funding and lead to unfairness for the majority of schools.

We highlighted these issues at the Committee Stage of the Bill and have engaged with schools, MLAs and other stakeholders who share our concerns. Although amendments have been made, these do not come close to addressing the key issues.

We have since issued a press release outlining our concerns, reported yesterday morning by [UTV News](#), the [Belfast Telegraph](#), the Irish News (print version) and [BBC News NI](#).

GBA Chairperson Jacqueline Weir highlighted: "We support children and young

people being educated together regardless of their cultural or religious identity. This happens in many schools in Northern Ireland, including voluntary grammar schools. The fact that the Bill does not acknowledge the work of all schools in embracing and encouraging diversity is particularly concerning."

Jacqueline added: "if approved, the legislation would be unfair to 93% of pupils In Northern Ireland, providing support for growth in some schools and potentially leading to unsustainability in others."

The full press release can be accessed [here](#).

The Further Consideration Stage concluded yesterday and the Bill stands referred to the Speaker ([official report](#))

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## Views Sought on Strategic Area Plans

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The Education Authority recently launched Consultations on Northern Ireland's draft Strategic Area Plans 2022-2027.

The EA has produced short videos for each of the strategic plans that provide a helpful overview:

1. [draft Strategic Area Plan 2022-27 overview](#)
2. [draft Special Education Strategic Area Plan 2022-27 overview](#)

The Consultations are open until 12th April 2022 and we are encouraging individual schools to respond. Information on how to respond can be accessed [here](#).

The EA is also running a series of online engagement events for Principals and Governors. If you cannot attend the relevant session (by phase/ location), you are welcome at the other events to give your views. The remaining sessions are:

<b>Date/time</b>	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Locality</b>
Friday 25 <sup>th</sup> February @ 10.30am	Primary	North
Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> March @ 2pm	Primary	East
Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup> March @ 2pm	Primary	South West

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March @10.30am | Primary | North

If you did not receive the joining details for the above events, please [contact us](#).

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## GBA AGM 2022 - Registration Now Open

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We recently issued an invitation to schools to attend our AGM on the afternoon of Wednesday 30th March 2022, beginning at 2pm. We are pleased to advise that we will be joined by guest speaker, Margaret Faragher, Chief Executive of CCEA, and the Education Authority Area Planning team.

Thank you to all who have registered so far. If you wish to attend the online event, please click [here](#) to register.



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## Nominations for GBA Executive Committee Now Open

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We currently have five vacancies on our Executive Committee and are encouraging nominations from schools.

GBA Executive Committee Members are drawn from Boards of Governors and undertake a wide range of activities on behalf of our member schools. Meetings are normally held on the fourth Wednesday of each month during term time (10am) so we would ask that volunteers are available at this time.

Please [contact us](#) for a nomination form.



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## Consultation and Policy Updates

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### - Consultations -

- The Department of Finance consultation on the Draft Budget, originally scheduled from 13th December 2021 to 7th March 2022, was paused on 15th February 2022 as it was not agreed by the Northern Ireland Executive. The Budget Bill 2022 has since received accelerated passage to ensure that delivery of public services can continue by authorising the Department of Finance to borrow on the credit of the sum appropriated for the year ending 31 March 2023. The Consideration Stage is scheduled for 28th February 2022.
- 7th February – 18th March 2022: The Department of Education publish annual Official Statistics on the uptake of school meals in Northern Ireland and is welcoming users' feedback on the statistical outputs. Further information is available [here](#).
- 13th January – 11th March 2022: Department of Education is consulting on

the Children and Young People's Strategy initial 3-year delivery plan 2021-2024. A full copy of the consultation document and other related documents including an online response form are available [here](#).

**- Political Update -**

- 23/02/22: Education Committee heard an Oral briefing from the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors regarding "Delivering a Better Education Estate for Future Generations". Education Committee sessions can be viewed [here](#).
- 23/02/22: Minister's Question topics included Covid-19 guidance, the Fair Start Report, the Education Budget and the Integrated Education Bill. Speaking of the Bill, the Minister said, "The Integrated Education Bill currently moving through the assembly absolutely serves to reinforce sectoral divides". Minister's Question sessions can be viewed [here](#).

**- Legislation Tracking -**

- Integrated Education Bill: Further Consideration Stage concluded on Thursday 24th February. The Bill now stands referred to the Speaker
  - Education (Curriculum) (CPR and AED) Bill – this is a Bill to require cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training and automatic external defibrillator (AED) awareness to be on the curriculum for pupils at key stage 3. The Bill passed Committee Stage on 2nd February 2022. Consideration Stage to be scheduled
  - General Teaching Council Bill is proceeding under the accelerated passage procedure. Consideration Stage to be scheduled.
  - Fair Employment (School Teachers) Bill - 2nd Stage is scheduled for 2nd March 2022.
  - A full list of Bills (Executive and Non-Executive) passing through the Northern Ireland Assembly in the current Mandate can be accessed [here](#).
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## Reconstitution of BoGs

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The GBA is interested in hearing from member schools regarding the reconstitution of their Boards of Governors. We use this information to engage with the Department of Education and to report any issues being faced by schools. Please [get in touch](#) and let us know how the process is progressing.

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## Area Planning

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As you will be aware, the GBA represents voluntary grammar schools on the various Area Planning Groups (Area Planning Steering Group, Area Planning Working Group and the Area Planning Local Groups). Discussions regarding the next Strategic Area Plan are underway.

The GBA is interested in hearing from schools regarding challenges and opportunities in their area and the need for increased SEN provision such as specialist units in mainstream post-primary schools. Please [contact us](#) for an initial conversation.

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## Shared Education

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The EA has received a number of expressions of interest from schools who wish to become engaged in Shared Education and is now collating the list of schools to begin the process of forming partnerships.

Over the coming months there will be a focus on three key areas for the new schools:

- **Building Leadership Capacity** – this will focus on developing principals and middle leaders to support Shared Education Partnership working
- **Teacher Professional Learning** – This will help develop the skills required, by teachers, to plan, implement and evaluate high quality Shared Education
- **Planning for Pupil Engagement** – This will explore the collaborative planning process involved in the development of Shared Education Programmes

If you require any further information regarding Shared Education projects, [please get in touch](#).



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## Safe Place - Free Upcoming Webinars

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There are three upcoming Safe Place webinars, all of which are free training:

Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> March at 7.30pm- <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/onus-safe-place-webinar-ards-north-down-borough-council-tickets-272773451737>

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March at 7.30pm- <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/onus-safe-place-webinar-ards-north-down-borough-council-tickets-272774615217>

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March at 7.30pm- <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/onus-safe-place-webinar-ards-north-down-borough-council-tickets-272774936177>

### **What is a Safe Place?**

Safe Place is a simple but very effective initiative that allows any business, organisation, church, school or community group to provide a 'Safe Place' where anyone affected by domestic abuse can confidentially access information on the range of support services available to them.

### **What does a Safe Place do?**

To become a Safe Place, organisations must attend a Safe Place Webinar and display Safe Place resources on their premises or their online platform. As a Safe Place you will display the Safe Place logo. This indicates that information on services for anyone affected by domestic violence and abuse is available on the premises. Organisations will not have to do anything beyond signposting people to the appropriate services. All resources will be provided by Onus.



## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. THE ONUS IS ON ALL OF US.

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Website: [www.onustraining.co.uk](http://www.onustraining.co.uk)

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## CCEA Promoting eNewsletter

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To further support teaching professionals in their lesson planning and professional development, CCEA would like to make stakeholders aware of their regular eNewsletter and email subscription service.

In recent weeks, the latest editions of Primary, Post-Primary and SEN eNewsletters have been distributed to all teaching professionals subscribed for updates from CCEA. Each issue has been designed to provide:

- information on new and existing resources;
- support and information on the Summer 22 assessment arrangements; and
- details of teacher professional development opportunities.

The updates included are concise and direct to ensure all information is easily accessed within one email. Each tailored issue is distributed 2-3 times throughout the academic year and previous issues can be found on the CCEA website.

To receive CCEA's future eNewsletters or other email updates simply visit: <https://ccea.org.uk/sign-up>

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## Teaching & Non-Teaching Vacancies

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The GBA provides a free advertising service for our member schools. 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.

**As we are currently receiving a high volume of job requests, please use our [job template](#) and allow one working day for posts to be uploaded. This does not include bank holidays and weekends.**

If you would like us to host a vacancy for your school, please [contact us](#).

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## British Council - Free Mental Health Conference

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The conference takes place at La Mon Hotel and Country Club from 11-13 April 2022 and is suitable for teachers in both primary and post-primary sectors who are keen to improve mental health policies – the Council welcomes teachers from a range of backgrounds including pastoral care leads, head teachers and those in special education.

**Places are free but limited. Register by 14th March.**

Click [here](#) for more information.

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## Newsletter Subscription

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Please feel free to forward our monthly updates to your school Governors. If any of your Governors would like to subscribe, please [send us](#) their email

address.

If you wish to unsubscribe to these emails, please [let us know](#).

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