
GBA News - 22nd August 2023



Chairperson's Message

Dear member school,

I hope you are well and feeling refreshed after the summer recess.

As we begin another school year, we would like to take this opportunity to thank our schools for their engagement and to offer our ongoing support as we move forward.

Budgets are tighter than ever and schools are pushing to deliver their statutory duties while creating a positive environment for pupils. The GBA recognises the difficulties of such a landscape and will continue to advocate for additional funding for the Northern Ireland Education System, as well as bringing forward pertinent issues on behalf of schools.

A key strategic aim of the GBA is to further and advance the interests and well-being of voluntary grammar schools in Northern Ireland. To help achieve this, our plans this year include:

- Increased face to face engagement with schools to identify challenges and opportunities.
- Representing schools on various forums such as Management Side, Integrated Education Act Steering Group, Area Planning Governance Groups, Shared Education Stakeholder Forum and various other cross-organisational groups.
- Development of voluntary grammar specific training materials for Boards of Governors.
- Responding to key consultations and contributing to policy development.
- Engagement with the Department of Education, politicians, media, community groups and other education stakeholders.

Please look out for our monthly newsletters in your inbox for current educational affairs and announcements. If your Governors wish to sign up to our monthly updates, please click [here](#) and add their details.

We look forward to engaging with you all this academic year and wish your school and pupils every success in their education journey.

With best wishes,
Leo O'Reilly, GBA Chairperson.



DE Equality Impact Assessment Consultation - GBA Response

The GBA recently responded to the Department of Education's equality impact assessment consultation, outlining the impacts of budget cuts on voluntary grammar schools and the wider education system.

Despite voluntary grammar schools being amongst the most sustainable schools in NI, the GBA has grave concerns regarding the future sustainability of the NI education system due to over a decade of real terms budget cuts, and reductions to this year's budget and capital investment.

There is a clear need for increased funding levels for the day-to-day running of schools to enable them to fulfil their statutory duties and provide additional support to vulnerable pupils, as highlighted in the [response](#).

GBA Learning Exchange Visit

The GBA is participating in a learning exchange visit to Wales, planned for the end of September 2023, and facilitated by the [North West Migrants' Forum](#) as part of their "Black Heritage in NU: Hidden History" project.

The project aims to shed light on the significant contributions of Black individuals to the history of NI, and systemically introduce Black History into the local curriculum, as well as creating a book on local Black history, and hosting an exhibition on Black History.

You may be aware that Wales has mandated Black history lessons across its national curriculum. The learning exchange visit aims to help participants understand the processes undertaken by Wales to embed black and minorised histories in their education curriculum through school visits and conversations with key stakeholders.

We will share our experiences from the visit with you in future newsletter editions.

If you wish to provide your views on Black History and the Northern Ireland Curriculum, please [contact us](#).

All Ireland Scholarships 2023

The All Ireland Scholarship Scheme which is funded by JP McManus provides financial support to high achieving students from low income households.

The scholarship offers students financial support of £5,500 per annum for the duration of their course.

Twenty five scholarships will be awarded to students who attend a grant aided post primary school or a Further Education College in Northern Ireland.

- **Nineteen Scholarships will be awarded to the top 'A' Level students from grant aided Post Primary Schools.** A minimum of two Scholarships will be offered in each county based on where students live.
- **Six Scholarships will be awarded to the top Level 3 Extended Diploma students from Further Education Colleges.** One Scholarship will be awarded in each of the six Further Education Colleges.

Applicants must have been in receipt of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) at the time of examination, and due to commence an undergraduate course in university in the academic year of 2023/2024.

The deadline for receipt of applications is **4pm on Thursday 31 August 2023.**

For more information and to apply, please click [here](#).

Area Planning Update

IMPORTANT NOTICE: **Operational Plan 2: 2024-26**

Work is now underway to analyse future need and develop workstreams for Operational Plan 2: 2024-26 (click [here](#) for more information on Operational Plans).

If you are considering a significant change to your school that may require a Development Proposal, it is essential for conversations to take place about this

during the planning year through the Area Planning Governance structures, please [contact us](#) if this is the case for your school.

Specialist Provision in Mainstream Schools

Background

[Specialist provision in a mainstream school](#) provides a modified learning environment with an enhanced Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) suited to a pupil's learning profile. Pupils, where appropriate, also benefit from experiencing a level of inclusion, commensurate with their level of need, within mainstream classes.

Planning

The Education Authority has taken forward a number of consultations over the last two years as part of the new, more agile, process for establishing specialist provision in a mainstream setting (i.e. without the need for a Development Proposal).

The Area Planning Local Groups, chaired by the EA, will soon be reconvening to discuss areas where there are pressures for SEN places and to plan for provision in September 2024 and beyond. If your school is interested in this type of provision, or would like more information, please [contact us](#).



Open Consultation: Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls

The Executive Office are leading on the development of a Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls.

This draft seven-year (2023-2030) Strategic Framework, has been co-designed with over 50 stakeholders from across government, community and voluntary sectors, and wider society, including those with lived experience, and builds on the evidence received and the key issues identified through the Call for Views process. This took place in 2022 and includes feedback from members of the GBA Executive Committee.

The consultation takes views on:

- The [Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls](#)
- The foundational [Action Plan](#)

Further detail and supporting documents can be viewed on the [Consultation page](#)

Timeline:

04 July 2023 to 03 October 2023.

The responses received will be considered by the EVAWG Directorate alongside evidence gathered during our wider stakeholder engagement. The proposals for the Strategic Framework and Foundational Action Plan are subject to the views of the Executive who will be responsible for final approval.

Shared Education

Shared Education Stakeholder Forum

The Shared Education Stakeholder Forum is led by the Department of

Education and the Education Authority, with representation from various education bodies including the GBA. The group is due to meet on 12th October 2023 - if you have any issues or feedback you would like us to take forward, please [contact us](#).

Shared Education Hub

The Education Authority's Shared Education Hub is available [here](#). The purpose of the site includes developing an understanding of Shared Education, building the capacity of the school system to deliver effective Shared Education and to provide a platform for sharing best practice and exploration of new approaches.

The site is also home to a number of TPL modules and various other resources that can be used by schools to deliver Shared Education.

CCEA also provides various Shared Education resources for schools, aligned with the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Please click [here](#) for more information.

Advertising of Teaching & Non-Teaching Vacancies on the GBA Website

The GBA provides a free advertising service for our member schools. Job vacancies are posted on our website and Twitter page. The Education Authority website also links to the GBA jobs section.

If you would like us to host a vacancy for your school, **please [contact us](#), using our [job template](#) and allow at least one working day for posts to be uploaded.**

Due to workload and staff leave during the month of September, please ensure that job requests are sent to us 2 working days in advance of the required publish date. Thank you.

