

GBA News – Friday 23rd January 2026



Building Stronger Governance Roadshows

The GBA will be delivering in-person training for Voluntary Grammar School Governors across Northern Ireland in Spring 2026:

The training will be delivered at the following venues and is open to governors and school leadership:

GBA Governance Roadshows: Locations/ Dates

Host School

Rainey Endowed, Magherafelt

Date

Thursday 5 February 2026

Methodist College, Belfast

**(SESSION FULL - PARTICIPANTS
WILL NOW BE ADDED TO A
WAITING LIST)**

Thursday 19 February 2026

Foyle College, Derry/Londonderry

Loreto Grammar, Omagh

St Patrick's Grammar, Armagh

Thursday 26 February 2026

Thursday 5 March 2026

Thursday 12 March 2026

Programme Outline:

6:00pm - Registration and networking supper

6:30pm - 3 x 20 minute presentations

- Good Governance in Voluntary Grammar Schools
- Finance
- Employment matters

7:30pm - Panel Q&A

8:30pm - Close

To reserve a place, please complete this [form](#)

The closing date for registration is:

- Friday 23 January for February events
- Friday 20 February for March events

We encourage you to register soon due to high demand and limited capacity.

Department of Finance NI - Consultation on 3 Year Budget

The Finance Minister has set out his proposals for the draft Budget 2026-2029/30 with proposed departmental allocations for day-to-day spending over the next three years and capital investment for the next four years.

Views are being sought to help shape how available funding is used to deliver public services. The consultation is available for response until 3 March 2026 (click on the graphic below for further information).

GBA Response - We want to Hear from You

The GBA is currently developing a response to the budget consultation, specifically in relation to the education budget.

The Acting Permanent Secretary has been providing briefings outlining the grave challenge that the budget presents to the wider education system. The scale of the challenge is unprecedented and the draft budget, in its current form falls well short of what is needed to adequately fund the education system. The GBA will continue to make the case for a fairer funding model for education.

We are keen to hear more from our member schools regarding the proposal for a longer term budget.

Please [get in touch](#) with us to share any positive comments or concerns about the advantages and challenges of a multi-year budget for schools.

Feedback received will be incorporated into our response. No individual school will be affiliated with our response as this will be reflective of the voluntary grammar sector as a whole. Thank you in advance for your input.



Attendance Matters Consultation - GBA Survey

The Education Minister has launched a [public consultation](#) on a new draft strategy to improve school attendance and understand the reasons behind pupil absence.

The GBA is currently developing a response to the consultation and is seeking your views.

Please complete this [short survey](#) to help inform our response on behalf of the voluntary grammar sector.

Teacher/ Parent Elections to the Board of Governors

The process of reconstitution of the Board of Governors has been completed in many of our member schools. For those still working through this process, we attach the link to the DE Guidance on conducting elections to fill the positions of Teacher Governor(s) and Parent Governor(s) - [Circular 2023/17: Election of Parent and Teacher Members of Boards of Governors | Department of Education](#). Part 2 (paragraphs 5-19) covers Parent Elections and Part 3 (paragraphs 21-25) deals with the process for electing Teacher Governors.

Area Planning Updates

Discussions around the workstreams for Operational Plan 3 (OP3) have now commenced and will conclude in March 2026. A number of projects published in Operational Plan 2 will roll over to the OP3 to allow more time for consultation and completion of the overall Development Proposal process.

OP3 will be a one-year plan spanning September 2026 to August 2027. Any workstreams brought forward for this plan must be completed within the timeframe.

Further information on the Operational Plans is available [here](#).

The current Area Planning cycle (2022-2027) will complete in August 2027 and discussions will soon be underway regarding the next cycle. We will keep you updated on any developments via our monthly newsletter.

Crisis Communications - Upcoming GBA Training Event

The GBA has engaged Morrow Communications and their media partners Donna Traynor and Ronan Kelly to deliver a further Crisis Communications workshop for members. This will take place on the morning of Tuesday 24th March at Lagan Valley Island.

The workshop will provide attendees with an understanding of:

- The media environment and fundamentals of PR
- Protecting your reputation in a crisis – why it is important, what to do and what to avoid
- How journalists operate – what they want from an interview vs what should you be prepared to give them
- How to establish and present your ideas with confidence
- How to make the most of interview opportunities

There are 10 places available at this workshop. Places will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

To book please email: nuala@gbani.org

NI Teacher's Pension Scheme – Webinar 29th January 2025

In this webinar, experts from the government-backed MoneyHelper service, in collaboration with the Teachers' Pay & Pensions Team, will provide information on Northern Ireland teacher pensions.

The session will cover:

- an overview of the teacher pension and its benefits
- how much money you might need in retirement
- how much you can expect from the state pension
- tracing old pensions and spotting scams.

For further information and to register please click [here](#).

Shared Education News

Students from 4 Belfast Schools unite for Decode Robotics Challenge at W5

Students from Methodist College, Malone Integrated College, Coláiste Feirste, and St Mary's Christian Brothers Grammar School, all based in Belfast, have come together to prepare for the First Tech Challenge, as part of their post primary PEACEPLUS ASPIRE partnership.



The robotics competition, called Decode, involves teams designing, building and programming robots to compete in an alliance format against other teams,

in W5, Belfast. Competition participants learn engineering skills and work collaboratively to solve problems. The challenge is focused on unlocking the mysteries of the world's artifacts through strategy, innovation, and teamwork.

Students are looking forward to having the support of an engineer at a future session, who will introduce them to essential design principles and guide their creative process.

PEACEPLUS ASPIRE (Advancing Shared Partnerships through Inclusive Relationships in Education) is led by the Education Authority (EA), alongside Léargas, Early Years- the organisation for young children, National Childhood Network (NCN) and the Fermanagh Trust. The project is supported by PEACEPLUS, a programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). It aims to provide direct and sustained contact between children and young people from all backgrounds.

GBA Shared Education Engagement

The GBA will be meeting with the EA Shared Education team in the coming weeks to discuss current and future Shared Education challenges and opportunities. If you would like us to raise anything on your behalf, please [contact us](#).

NI Assembly - Legislation Updates

School Uniform Bill

The School Uniforms (Guidance and Allowances) Bill is currently awaiting Royal Assent and therefore is not yet statute, however, schools were advised in October 2025 to adhere to the provisions within the Bill in preparation for the legislation being in place for the 2026/27 academic year.

We are aware of a number of concerns raised by our member schools and governors, for example, the constraints of price caps and limited timescales for consultation with parents.

We would like to take this opportunity to invite you to raise any issues you may have by [contacting us](#). We will use this information to inform future discussions on the matter.

General Teaching Council Bill

The General Teaching Council Bill is currently progressing through the Committee Stage, with evidence being considered by the NI Assembly Education Committee.

This week, Committee members heard from GTCNI representatives, Ian Gallagher (interim CEO), Mary Jackson (Head of Corporate Services), and Julie-Anne Stevenson (Head of Professional Standards). The evidence session is available to watch [here](#).

Employ a Language Assistant at Your School - British Council Opportunity

Modern Language Assistants are speakers of French, German, Irish, Italian, Mandarin Chinese and Spanish who can help students in the UK build their cultural capital by developing their linguistic and cross-cultural skills.

Deadlines to host a language assistant for 2026-27

- Applications open 25 February 2026
- Applications close 30 April 2026
- Applications for Chinese Language Assistants close 1 April 2026

Further information, including an expression of interest form, is available [here](#).

Advertising of Teaching and Support roles 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.

****PLEASE NOTE THAT OUR JOB TEMPLATE HAS BEEN UPDATED AND IS AVAILABLE TO DOWNLOAD [HERE](#)****

If you would like us to host a vacancy for your school, **please contact us, with the completed job template for each post, and allow at least TWO WORKING DAYS for posts to be uploaded.**

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