



Press Release
21 November 2011

**Education Minister makes key announcement
at ANIELB conference**

Minister for Education, John O'Dowd, made a key announcement regarding implementation of the Education and Skills Authority (ESA) which will replace the five Education and Library Boards; the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS); the Staff Commission and the Youth Council, to members of the Association of Northern Ireland Education and Library Boards (ANIELB) and educationalists attending its annual conference.

The one day conference was held in Stranmillis University College, Belfast and facilitated this year by the Western Education and Library Board (WELB) under the theme 'Governance and Accountability in Education'.

In his keynote address, Minister for Education, John O'Dowd, said: "I welcome the opportunity to address the conference. The education landscape is currently going through long overdue change. It is vital that we work together in order to ensure that we put the best interests of our children and young people first. I am committed to the establishment of ESA and that we continue to address the challenges ahead. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Chief Executives, Board Members and their predecessors for their great commitment to education over the past number of years."

Welcoming greater clarity and certainty for the education sector going forward, Rev Robert Herron, ANIELB President and WELB Vice-Chairman, said: "The Boards

remain committed to providing high quality education services to children, young people and the public during the transition period leading up to the implementation of ESA.”

He continued: “Today’s conference promotes a vision of an education system where there is sound governance, effective leadership, high quality teaching and learning, good quality outcomes and above all focus on the needs and aspirations of children and young people.”

He also praised the work of Education and Library Boards as they continue to meet the challenge of leading education in an ever changing environment.

Speaking at the conference, Mervyn Storey, Chair of the Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Education said: “I wish to commend the work of the Board Members, Chief Executives and Officers of the Board for their dedication and commitment through what has been a very difficult and challenging time.” He added: “I am very confident in the road map that has been announced.”

Following the ANIELB AGM, members voted on Resolutions put forward by the Education and Library Boards on: early years; financial challenges; transport and special education; capital development and raising standards.

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