

President's Welcome

I know that for many in the Northern Ireland education community the Annual Conference of the Association of Education and Library Boards has been a recurring diary entry.

It is my hope that you already plan to attend the 2008 Conference, 16-17 October 2008, in a new and I believe exciting venue, the Millennium Forum, Derry.

The Conference theme: "Education and Community: Making Connections" describes our current service ambitions as well as conveying aspirations of achieving even closer community relevance.

The future of Northern Ireland is in the hands of all of us who are charged with the education and care of our young people. We have a generation of young people in our schools, colleges and universities who have the opportunity to build a society in which each is valued and an economy which is capable of sustaining them without the need for the best and most educated to leave for more affluent lifestyles further a field. As we approach the end of the first decade of the 21st century, we have the responsibility to develop our education system into one which is not only fit for purpose now but which can meet challenges that no one has yet thought about.

We shall be privileged to welcome a bevy of well known educationalists:-

- Professor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend
- Professor John Macbeath
- Alan Dyson and Mel Ainscow
- Dame Anna Hassan

In response to feedback from the 2007 Conference the number of speakers has been reduced to allow greater audience involvement so I hope you will both come and participate in what promises to be a 'new look' Conference.

I look forward to welcoming you.

Cllr Pat Brannigan