



16 April 2013

Dear Parent/Guardian

RE: PROPOSALS FOR POST PRIMARY PROVISION IN THE CRAIGAVON AREA

Please find enclosed a copy of a letter from Mr T Murphy, Chief Executive of the Southern Education and Library Board, and the SELB proposals for post primary provision in the Craigavon Area.

The governors of both Lurgan College and Portadown College note the SELB's acknowledgement of the insignificant community support (8%) for a Collegiate structure as originally outlined and the overwhelming support (83%) for the retention of the current Dickson Plan system of education. The SELB has put forward two options for the Boards of Governors of the 7 controlled schools to consider. At 14+ a common approach has been adopted by SELB in both Lurgan and Portadown to address the accommodation and financial issues currently experienced by Craigavon Senior High School.

Option A involves the creation of a so-called bilateral (all ability/comprehensive) 14-19 school in Lurgan and in Portadown. Whilst each of these schools may initially remain on split sites, they would inevitably be reduced to single site schools in a short period of time. Both sets of governors agree that this will lead to the destruction of controlled grammar school education across Craigavon. The resulting comprehensive schools will deny choice for parents and inevitably lead to considerable migration of young people out of the area, the destabilisation of local educational provision and the skewing of local primary school curricula. This flies in the face of the Minister O'Dowd's claimed commitment to 'parental choice' and 'putting pupils first'.

Option B, which involves the creation of a bespoke single campus 14-19 Craigavon Senior High School, will secure enhanced accommodation, curricular provision and appropriate pathways for the young people. The management of a single campus catering for 4, instead of 2, year groups will guarantee the long-term economic viability and sustainability of the school. This option also retains grammar school provision at the two Colleges and opens the opportunity to develop meaningful collaboration, in line with current Department of Education policy. As stated by the SELB, the geographical location of any future school sites 'would be a decision for Boards of Governors'. As an agreed Area Plan, this option will enjoy robust community and political support and release much needed capital for the long overdue new school builds. As such, Option B has the unequivocal support of both Lurgan College and Portadown College.

The Board of the SELB plans to take a decision on specific Development Proposals on 26 June 2013. It is vital that parents and students communicate their views on the future of post-primary education in the Craigavon area in advance of this meeting. This should be done by communicating directly with Mr Tony Murphy, Chief Executive, the Southern Education and Library Board, 3 Charlemont Place, The Mall, Armagh, BT61 9AX (selb.hq@selb.org) and to local political/community representatives.

Thank you for support in relation to this very important matter.

Yours sincerely

PETER AIKEN
CHAIRMAN OF PORTADOWN COLLEGE
BOARD OF GOVERNORS

STANLEY ABRAHAM
CHAIRMAN OF LURGAN COLLEGE
BOARD OF GOVERNORS