

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTER



EDUCATION SUPPORT STAFF

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Dear Colleague,

Pay and Grading Review Outcome

By now you will be aware that, following their individual consultation processes, all four education support staff unions have collectively agreed the settlement terms for the EA Pay and Grading Review.

Since my appointment as Education Minister earlier this year, I have been acutely aware of the pay and recruitment and retention issues faced by education support staff and a key priority for me has been resolution of this very difficult and protracted issue.

As a school governor for many years, I was already aware of the important role played by you and your support staff colleagues but since my appointment as Minister my appreciation for your role has deepened. I have seen firsthand your care, compassion and diligence without which schools would be unable to function. This is why I actively supported the EA Pay and Grading Review business case and my Departmental officials have worked intensively with the Education Authority and the JNC unions to find a resolution to this challenging issue.

This has taken longer to resolve than I would have liked, and I thank you for your patience, but you will be aware of the very significant budgetary issues faced by the Northern Ireland Executive and the education sector in particular. Notwithstanding these challenges, I have engaged with Executive colleagues to secure the funding required to deliver the agreement.

I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the trade union officials who have worked constructively with the Education Authority and my officials to conclude the agreement which has now been ratified and will be implemented. I understand that EA payroll is working hard towards their aim to implement stage 1 of the

agreement in advance of the Christmas break, and I am sure this will be welcome news to you all.

I hope that you will appreciate the benefits of this significant investment in pay as you deserve to be paid appropriately for the extremely important work you do. I also trust that the restructured pay scales will improve the recruitment and retention of support staff in the future.

I am particularly pleased to see the cessation of industrial action right across the education sector and the benefits this brings to the education of our children and young people. I am fully aware of the continuing challenges of pay and whilst I have no role in the national NJC pay negotiations, I want to assure you that I will strive to do all I can to build on the significant progress that this agreement represents.

Thank you again for all that you do for the children and young people in your care.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Paul Givan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Paul Givan MLA
Minister of Education