



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Education

Minutes of Proceedings

Tuesday 18 August 2020

Meeting Location: Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, Belfast

Present:

Mr Chris Lyttle MLA (Chairperson)
Ms Karen Mullan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Maurice Bradley MLA
Mr Robbie Butler MLA
Mr William Humphrey MLA
Ms Catherine Kelly MLA
Mr Daniel McCrossan MLA
Mr Justin McNulty MLA
Mr Robin Newton MBE MLA

Apologies:

None

In Attendance:

Mr Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Stewart Kennedy (Assistant Clerk)
Ms Gareth Cross (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 3:25PM in open session



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1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

The Committee adopted a revised order for agenda items.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of its meeting held on 8 July 2020.

Justin McNulty left the meeting at 3:28pm.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed the minutes of its meeting held on 14 August 2020.

Justin McNulty rejoined the meeting at 3:29pm.

William Humphrey joined the meeting at 3:29pm.

3. Matters Arising

Agreed: The Committee agreed to supplement its previous motion of 14 August 2020 on the awarding of A-level grades with the wording: “The preceding is not to refer to students who have withdrawn from an A2 course prior to the lockdown.”

2. Covid-19 and Schools Restart – Minister for Education– Oral Evidence Session

The Minister and officials joined the meeting at 3:30pm.

Mr Peter Weir MLA, Minister for Education

Mr John Smith, Deputy Secretary, Department of Education; and

Ms Janis Scallon, Director of Sustainable Schools Policy and Planning,
Department of Education

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Minister and his officials briefed the Committee on issues relating to Restart.

This was followed by a question and answer session.



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William Humphrey left the meeting at 4:48pm.

The Chairperson thanked the Minister and officials for the briefing.

Daniel McCrossan left the meeting at 5.29pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking:

- information on the Department's access to covid-19 testing capacity for schools including the number of tests that can be processed and the likely turnaround time for those tests;
- information on the additional Restart costs for schools including catering, well-being support and educational catch-up as well as an update on the provision and timing of additional resources for schools including through the Engage programme;
- sight of the CCEA curriculum guidance to schools for 2021;
- information on the need for risk assessments for medically vulnerable children and staff including the number of assessments likely to be required and the progress to-date in completing them;
- sight of the additional Restart guidance to be provided to Special Schools including in respect of transport arrangements; and
- clarification as to whether pupil well-being guidance will be issued to schools and whether DE has sought guidance on this matter, including the identification of trauma in returning pupils, from Stranmillis University College.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to amend the agenda for its meeting on 21 August 2020 so as to include a briefing on Restart from the teaching unions.

3. Any Other Business

The Committee considered issues relating to its forward work programme.

4. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next Committee meetings will be held on Friday 21 August 2020 at 9:30am in the Senate Chamber in Parliament Buildings and by video conference.



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The meeting was adjourned at 5:37pm.

Mr Chris Lyttle MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Education
21 August 2020