



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Education

Minutes of Proceedings

13 October 2021

Meeting Location: Teleconference

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Mr Chris Lyttle MLA (Chairperson)

Ms Nicola Brogan MLA

Mr Robbie Butler MLA

Mrs Diane Dodds MLA

Mr Harry Harvey MLA

Mr Justin McNulty MLA

Mr Robin Newton MBE MLA

Ms Aoibhinn Treanor (Assembly Clerk)

Mr Mark McQuade (Assistant Clerk)

Mr Craig Mealey (Clerical Supervisor)

Ms Emma Magee (Clerical Officer)

Apologies:

Mr Pat Sheehan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Daniel McCrossan MLA



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The meeting commenced at 9:35am in public session.

1. Apologies

Apologies as above.

2. Chairperson's Business

2.1 Record of Informal Meeting - Future Schools Project 5 October 2021

The Committee noted a record of an informal briefing on the Future Schools Project and agreed to hold a formal briefing on this on 17 November.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of its meetings held on 6 October 2021 and 7 October 2021.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Correspondence

5.1 The Committee noted an index of correspondence received.



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5.2 The Committee noted a response from the Minister of Education providing an update and clarification on a range of issues in relation to school restart.

5.3 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education on school uniform policy.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write again to the Department of Education seeking:

- clarification on how the review of free school meals and uniform grant eligibility criteria will effectively limit the cost of school uniforms;
- The Terms of Reference for the Review of free school meals and uniform grant eligibility criteria;
- The rationale for the timescale envisaged for the review; and
- That the Department provide it with an oral briefing on this matter at the Committee's meeting of 3 November 2021.

5.4 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education providing an update on post-primary transfer and difficulties experienced placing children in appropriate post-primary places.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking early sight of its revised guidance on the transfer process and admission criteria.

5.5 The Committee noted correspondence from Department of Education providing a written update on the October Monitoring round 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to hear an oral briefing on October monitoring from DE officials at the Committee meeting of 3 November 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to share the briefing paper with the Committee for Finance.

5.6 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education regarding a Temporary Modification of Education Duties Notice made under The Coronavirus Act.

5.7 The Committee noted correspondence from the Chairpersons' Liaison Group regarding information for proposals for new or amended European Union Law.



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5.8 The Committee noted correspondence from Community Relations in Schools (CRIS) about its survey of Nursery Schools and concerns about the impact of the pandemic on them.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to return to this correspondence at its next meeting.

6. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered its forward work programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the sponsors of the following Private Members' Bills to provide it with oral briefings:

- The Education (Curriculum) (CPR and AED) Bill; and
- The Period Products (Free Provision) Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its forward work programme.

The Committee changed the order of its agenda.

7. Integrated Education Bill - Committee Stage – Consideration of Responses to the Committee's Call for Evidence

The Committee noted:

- A list of written responses to the Committee's call for evidence on the Integrated Education Bill;
- A summary of the responses received through the Citizen Space platform; and
- Correspondence from Integrated AlumNI.

8. Dyslexia Services - Oral Briefing by the by the Children's Law Centre

The Committee noted a briefing paper from the Children's Law Centre.



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The following witnesses joined the meeting by video conference at 10:01am:

Ms Rachel Hogan, Special Education Needs Representative, Children's Law Centre

Mr Liam Mackle LLB, Advice Manager, Children's Law Centre

The following witness joined the meeting by video conference at 10:16am:

Ms Kate McKeown, parent

The witnesses briefed the Committee on the services and support available for children with dyslexia.

The briefing was covered by Hansard.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for the briefing.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Aidan McKeown encouraging him with his educational Journey.

9. Dyslexia Services - Oral Briefing by the Education Authority

The Committee noted a briefing paper from the Education Authority.

The following witnesses joined the meeting by video conference at 11:43am:

Ms Una Turbitt, Interim Director of Children and Young People's Services, Education Authority

Ms Cynthia Currie, Assistant Director, Children and Young People's Services, Education Authority

Mr Joe Healy, Head of Literacy Service Children & Young People's Service, Education Authority.

The witnesses briefed the Committee on the services and support available for children with dyslexia.

The briefing was covered by Hansard.



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This was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for the briefing.

Mr Newton left the meeting at 1:14pm

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Education Authority seeking:

- Information on its project to develop a data development strategy;
- Information on its time allocation model;
- The Terms of Reference for the review of the criteria;
- Details of the number of peripatetic teachers employed and the number of pupils being supported by this service;
- Information on accredited teacher training on dyslexia;
- Information on dyslexia support available within Irish-Medium Education;
- Information on Its longitudinal workforce strategy regarding the recruitment of Educational psychologists; and
- An update on the Educational reform programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Stranmillis University College and St Mary's University about the inclusion of dyslexia training in teacher training.

10. Any Other Business

No Other Business was discussed.

11. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next formal meeting will be a Concurrent Committee of the Committee for Education and the Committee for the Economy meeting to be held on Wednesday 20 October 2021 in the Senate Chamber and by video conference at 10:00am.

The next formal meeting will be held on Thursday 21 October 2021 by video conference at 9:00am.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:21pm.



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Chris Lyttle MLA

Chairperson, Committee for Education

21 October 2021