



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Committee for Education

## Minutes of Proceedings

30 September 2026

**Meeting Location:** Room 29 Parliament Buildings

**Present:**

Mr Nick Mathison MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Pat Sheehan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Danny Baker MLA  
Mr David Brooks MLA  
Mr Jon Burrows MLA  
Mrs Michelle Guy MLA  
Cathy Mason MLA  
Julie Middleton MLA

**In attendance:**

Ms Emer Boyle (Assembly Clerk)  
Ms Claire Milliken (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Jonathan Lamont (Assistant Clerk)  
Mr Mark McQuade (Assistant Clerk)  
Mr Jim Nulty (Clerical Supervisor)  
Ms Aisling Willighan (Clerical Officer)  
Mr Stephen Orme (Assembly Clerk) (Item 8 only)



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Mr Jonathan Redpath (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk) (Item 8 only)

**Attended via teleconference facilities:**

Ms Cara Hunter MLA

The meeting commenced at 2:00pm in public session.

### **1. Apologies**

No apologies were received.

### **2. Chairperson's Business**

Mrs Guy joined the meeting at 2:01pm.

Mr Burrows joined the meeting at 2:02pm.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Education indicating that he is instructing officials not to attend Committee meetings.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to seek procedural and legal advice in relation to the contents of the Minister's letter prior to a response being sent.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to seek clarity from the Department of Education in relation to the attendance of the Permanent Secretary at a briefing scheduled for Wednesday 7 October 2026.

The Chairperson recorded the Committee's thanks to stakeholders who had participated in a stakeholder event on the Socioeconomic Deprivation and Educational Underachievement as it impacts Boys. The Chairperson informed



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members that a record of the event would be prepared for a future committee meeting.

### **3. Declaration of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **4. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **5. Draft Minutes**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of its meeting held on 23 September 2026.

### **6. Integrated Education – briefing from Integrated Education Fund and Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education**

The Committee noted briefing papers from Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education and the Integrated Education Fund. The Committee also noted a copy of correspondence from the Integrated Education Fund to the Minister of Education.

The following officials joined the meeting at 2:41pm

Paul Caskey, Chief Executive, Integrated Education Fund

Paul Collins, Head of Public Affairs and Advocacy, Integrated Education Fund

Sean Pettis, Chief Executive Officer, Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education

The officials briefed the Committee on integrated education.

This was followed by a question and answer session.



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**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education to ask whether there is an intention to commit resources to a review of the Statement of Principles for Integrated Education.

### **7. Integrated Education - briefing from Department of Education**

The Committee noted a briefing paper from the Department of Education

The Committee noted that the Department of Education had informed it that officials would not be in attendance, following instruction from the Minister of Education.

The meeting moved to closed session at 3:56pm

### **8. Education (Holiday Meal Payments) Bill - briefing from Bill Office**

The following officials joined the meeting at 3:56pm

Mr Stephen Orme, Assembly Clerk, NIA Bill Office

Mr Jonathan Redpath, Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk, NIA Bill Office

The officials briefed the Committee on proposed amendments to the Education (Holiday Meal Payments) Bill and the Irish Medium Education (Workforce Plan) Bill.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

The meeting returned to public session at 4:05pm

Mr Burrows left the meeting at 4:05pm

The Committee considered the following amendments to the Education (Holiday Meal Payments) Bill:

Clause 1, Page 1, Line 23

At end insert—



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‘(1FA) The daily allowance under Article 58(1F) shall be no less than any charge imposed for a school meal, in accordance with arrangements approved by the Department.’

Clause 1, Page 2, Line 10

At end insert—

‘and Article 58(1FA)’.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content to propose the amendments to the Assembly.

The Committee considered the following amendment to the Irish Medium Education (Workforce Plan) Bill:

Clause 1, Page 2, Line 3

At end insert—

‘(ba) the Education Authority; and’]

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content to propose the amendment to the Assembly.

## **9. Strategic Review of Current SEN Provision and Transformation Agenda Agreement of Motion**

The Committee considered the following motion for the Strategic Review of Current SEN Provision and Transformation Agenda:

‘That this Assembly notes the report of the Committee for Education on the Strategic Review of Current Special Educational Needs (SEN) Provision and Transformation Agenda; recognises that despite sustained efforts to implement reform, significant systemic challenges remain; further notes the particular SEN workforce challenges,



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including specialist staffing shortages, in the Irish-medium education sector; identifies the need for greater investment and inclusion in SEN provision; and calls on the Minister of Education to prioritise early intervention and stronger support for schools before any reduction in support ratios is considered’.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the content of the Motion and for the Motion to be laid in the Business Office.

### 10. Correspondence

10.1 The Committee noted an index of correspondence.

10.2 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education regarding public consultation on Review of Temporary Variation Policy.

10.3 The Committee noted a written ministerial statement regarding the publication of Key Stage Assessment Outcomes.

10.4 The Committee considered correspondence from the Mental Health Champion requesting to brief the Committee on TransformED

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing from the Mental Health Champion.

10.5 The Committee noted an invitation from Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People to the launch of research on Children’s Experiences of Missed Education.

10.6 The Committee considered correspondence from Education Authority regarding funding of Mill Strand Integrated School.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking an update on the work of the independent review of baseline school funding.

10.7 The Committee noted the invitation from Committee for Finance to an event to acknowledge Baby Loss Week.

10.8 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding the August figures for Public Expenditure Outturn and Forecast Outturn.



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10.9 The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding historical safeguarding issues.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to refer the correspondence to the Department of Education.

10.10 The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding the CCEA withdrawal of German examinations.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to arrange an oral briefing with CCEA on this matter.

10.11 The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding the CCEA withdrawal of German examinations.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to arrange an oral briefing with CCEA on this matter.

10.12 The Committee considered correspondence received from an individual regarding the briefing from the Department of Education at the Committee meeting on 23 September 2026.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Department of Education for comment.

10.13 The Committee considered correspondence received from an individual regarding the briefing from the Department of Education at the Committee meeting on 23 September 2026.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Department of Education for comment.

10.14 The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding photovoltaic solar panels on school roofs.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed write to the Education Authority regarding the issues raised in the correspondence.

10.15 The Committee considered correspondence received from an individual regarding the briefing from the Department of Education at the Committee meeting on 23 September 2026.



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**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Department of Education for comment.

### **11. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered and agreed its forward work programme.

### **12. Any Other Business**

The Committee discussed recent disturbances involving young people in the Foyle constituency.

### **13. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting**

The next Committee for Education meeting will be held on Wednesday 07 October 2026 at 2:00pm in room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:20pm.

**Nick Mathison MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Education**  
**07 October 2026**