



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Education

Minutes of Proceedings

28 April 2021

Meeting Location: Teleconference

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Mr Chris Lyttle MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Pat Sheehan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Maurice Bradley MLA
Ms Nicola Brogan MLA
Mr Robbie Butler MLA
Mr William Humphrey MBE MLA
Mr Daniel McCrossan MLA
Mr Robin Newton MBE MLA

Apologies: Mr Justin McNulty MLA

In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Ms Aoibhinn Treanor (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Mark McQuade (Assistant Clerk)
Mr Craig Mealey (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Emma Magee (Clerical Officer)



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The meeting commenced at 9:39am in open session

1. Apologies

No apologies were received.

2. Chairperson's Business

2.1 The Chairperson referred members to a response from the Department on issues arising from the Ministerial briefing on 23 March 2021.

2.2 The Committee noted draft wording for a restraint and seclusion motion.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the draft wording for a Committee motion at its next meeting.

2.3 The Committee noted that the Minister of Education has indicated will not be available to brief the Committee before 19 May. Committee members recorded their disappointment that he was unavailable before this date.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to observe a minute's silence at 11am to mark International Workers' Memorial Day.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of its meeting held on 21 April 2021.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.



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5. Budget 2021-22 - Departmental Oral Briefing

The Committee noted:

- Department of Education Business Plan;
- Department of Education Business Plan 2020/21
- End of Year Monitoring Final Position at 31 March 2021;
- Department of Education 2021-22 Opening Resource Budget;
- Comparison of Capital Budget Outturn against the 2021-22 Opening Capital Position; and
- 2021-22 Budget Education Distribution Table.

The following witnesses joined the meeting by video conference at 9:51am:

Mr Gary Fair, Director of Finance, Department of Education

Mr Neil Palmer, Head of Budgeting Team, Department of Education

Mr Philip Irwin, Director of Investment and Infrastructure, Department of Education

Officials briefed the Committee on the budget for 2021-2022.

Mr Sheehan joined the meeting at 10:03am.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

Mr Bradley left the meeting at 10:45am.

The Committee observed a minute's silence at 11:00am to mark International Workers' Memorial Day.

The Chairperson thanked the witness for the briefing.

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

- information on the in-year monitoring process, one-year budgets and overall underinvestment in education;
- information about a joined up approach to mental health;
- a briefing on the common funding formula;
- a briefing on the timescale for the childcare strategy and strategic insight programme;



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- information on funding underpinning addressing bullying in schools;
- information on funding for deprivation and underachievement; and
- information on planning and screening for gender impacts on budgeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to councils asking what actions they are taking to provide summer programmes and to support youth mental health recovery.

6. Youth Engagement - Oral Briefing from QUB and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

The Committee noted briefing papers from Professor Lundy and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth; and the Government of Ireland Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth report – ‘Participation Framework: National Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making’.

The following witnesses joined the meeting by video conference at 11:12am:

Professor Laura Lundy, School of Social Sciences & Social Work, Queen's University Belfast

Dr Linda O'Sullivan, Assistant Principal Officer, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth

The witnesses briefed the Committee on youth engagement.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for the briefing.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking an update on its youth engagement work.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the Assembly Education Service to brief on youth assembly.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to examine how it could best engage with young people.



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Mr Sheehan left the meeting at 12:09pm

7. Parents' views on Education during the 2021 Lockdown: Two Surveys - Oral Briefing from Centre for Research in Educational Underachievement and Parentkind

The Committee noted:

- A Centre for Research in Educational Underachievement and Parentkind Briefing paper;
- Parentkind Coronavirus Parent Survey Results March 2021;
- Parentkind Infographic - Coronavirus Mental Health and Well-being March 2021; and
- Centre for Research in Educational Underachievement Survey - Home-Schooling during the Covid-19 Crisis.

The following witnesses joined the meeting by video conference at 12:09pm:

Mrs Jayne Thompson, Head of NI Parent Kind, Parent Kind Northern Ireland

Ms Kirsty Yates, Research Officer, Parent Kind Northern Ireland

Dr Noel Purdy, Director of Centre for Research in Educational Underachievement, Stranmillis University College

Dr Jonathan Harris, Research Fellow, Centre for Research in Educational Underachievement

Dr John McMullen, Senior Lecturer, Centre for Research in Educational Underachievement

The witnesses briefed the Committee on their surveys of parents views on Education during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mr Lyttle made a declaration of interest that he is the chairperson of the All Party Group on Parental Participation in Education

This was followed by a question and answer session.



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The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for the briefing.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking a response to the Parentkind and Centre for Research in Educational Underachievement reports, and to ask it to arrange to attend the All Party Group on Parental Involvement in Education.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to make its research reports on Gender Budgeting and Deprivation Indicators publicly available.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to address remaining agenda items by correspondence under Standing Order 115.

Mr Humphrey left the meeting at 1:23pm.

Mr Newton left the meeting at 1:24pm.

Decision making quorum was lost at 1:24pm.

8. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next formal Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 5 May 2021 by video conference at 9:00am.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:27pm

Chris Lyttle MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Education
5 May 2021