



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Education

Minutes of Proceedings

21 October 2021

Meeting Location: Teleconference

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Mr Chris Lyttle MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Pat Sheehan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Nicola Brogan MLA
Mr Robbie Butler MLA
Baroness Dodds of Duncairn MLA
Mr Justin McNulty MLA

Ms Aoibhinn Treanor (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Mark McQuade (Assistant Clerk)
Mr Craig Mealey (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Marcus Matthews (Clerical Supervisor)

Apologies: Mr Harry Harvey MLA
Mr Daniel McCrossan MLA
Mr Robin Newton MBE MLA



Northern Ireland Assembly

The meeting commenced at 9:13am in public session.

1. Apologies

Apologies as above.

2. Chairperson's Business

2.1 Staff changes

The Chairperson informed members of changes to the Committee staff. The Chairperson extended the Committee's thanks to Emma Magee for her work for the Committee and welcomed Marcus Matthews to the Committee staff.

2.2 Legislation

The Chairperson informed members that the CPR Bill and the Period Products Bill were provisionally scheduled to have their Second Stage debates on 8 and 9 November respectively; that both engaged the Education portfolio; and that during SO64 discussions about the crosscutting Period Products Bill it emerged that the Education Committee was best placed to scrutinise this bill.

The Deputy Chair informed the Committee that he expected to introduce a PMB on holiday hunger in the coming weeks and notified his intention to follow the provisions of Standing Order 42 in bidding for accelerated passage of his bill.

2.3 Concurrent meeting on 14-19 strategy

The Chairperson informed members that the planned meeting of the concurrent Committee for Education and the Committee for the Economy on the 14-19 Strategy had been cancelled as departmental officials were not available to brief the joint Committee.



Northern Ireland Assembly

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister for Education and the Minister for the Economy seeking an explanation for the cancellation of the briefing.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of its meeting held on 13 October 2021.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Correspondence

5.1 The Committee noted an index of correspondence received.

5.2 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 arrange a visit or informal meeting to examine the impact of the pandemic on Nursery Schools.

5.3 The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Welsh Parliament Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee to the Welsh Government Minister for Education and Welsh Language regarding “essay mills”.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Committee for the Economy.

5.4 The Committee noted further correspondence from the Pink Ladies Cancer Support Group in response to correspondence from the Education Authority regarding weed killer at school premises.



Northern Ireland Assembly

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in relation to its scrutiny of a strategy about the future use of pesticides.

Mr McNulty joined the meeting at 9:30am

5.5 The Committee noted correspondence from Verbal seeking a meeting with the Committee on its work across Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to arrange a briefing with Verbal.

5.6 The Committee noted an invitation from Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta to visit an Irish Medium School.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider a visit as part of its work plan.

5.7 The Committee noted correspondence regarding segregated education in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to add the correspondence to responses on the Integrated Education Bill.

6. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered its forward work programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its forward work programme.

7. Integrated Education Bill - Oral Briefing by Integrated AlumNI

The Committee noted a response from Integrated AlumNI to the Committee's call for evidence on the Integrated Education Bill.

The following witnesses joined the meeting by video conference at 9:33am

Mr Michael Lynch, Chair of Board of Trustees, Integrated AlumNI

Ms Lise McCaffery, Board Trustee, Integrated AlumNI



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Mr Adam McGibbon, Member, Integrated AlumNI

The witnesses briefed the Committee on the Integrated Education Bill.

The briefing was covered by Hansard.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

Mr Butler left the meeting at 9:56am.

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for the briefing.

8. Integrated Education Bill – Oral briefing from Northern Ireland Humanists

The Committee noted a response from Northern Ireland Humanists to the Committee's call for evidence on the Integrated Education Bill.

The following witnesses joined the meeting by video conference at 10:23am:

Mr Boyd Sleator, Coordinator, Northern Ireland Humanists

Dr Ruth Wareham, Education Campaigns Manager, Humanists UK

Mr Sheehan left the meeting at 10:24am.

Baroness Dodds left the meeting at 10:24am.

The Committee lost quorum and the meeting was adjourned at 10:24am.

Chris Lyttle MLA

Chairperson, Committee for Education

3 November 2021