



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Education

Minutes of Proceedings

16 February 2022

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

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

Apologies:

Mrs Diane Dodds MLA
Mr Justin McNulty MLA



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The meeting commenced at 9:38am in public session.

1. Apologies

Apologies as above.

Mr Harvey delegated his vote to Mr Newton.

2. Chairperson's Business

2.1 Review of the Education Authority

The Committee noted a record of an informal meeting with Baker Tilly Mooney Moore about a review of the Education Authority.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to email all MLAs to make them aware that the review is taking place.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of its meetings held on 1 February 2022, 2 February 2022 and 9 February 2022.



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4. Matters Arising

There were no Matters Arising.

5. Correspondence

5.1 The Committee noted an index of correspondence.

5.2 The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education regarding departmental policy on school trips during Covid-19 and Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) school staff.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the response to the correspondent who raised this issue with it.

5.3 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education regarding its Business Plan Mid-Year Report 2021-2022.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a briefing on budget and business plan from Department of Education officials.

5.4 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Justice regarding an extension to calls for views on two new strategies developed by the Executive Office, Department of Justice, and the Department of Health.

5.5 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office regarding the launch of the formal public consultation on the Executive's draft Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Committee Clerk would prepare a draft response for the Committee's consideration.

5.6 The Committee noted correspondence from the Public Accounts Committee regarding its Report on Closing the Gap – Social Deprivation and Links to Educational Attainment.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to explore arrangements for an oral briefing from the Northern Ireland Audit Office on the report.



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5.7 The Committee noted correspondence from the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment (CCEA) about the launch of its New Student Guide to Assessment Arrangements, Optional Omissions and Contingencies for Summer 2022.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to discuss this with CCEA in a planned upcoming oral briefing.

5.8 The Committee noted correspondence about a product to improve air quality in classrooms.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Education Authority for information.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking information on how companies should engage regarding air filtering devices for schools.

5.9 The Committee noted correspondence from Dromore Central Primary School regarding concerns on the Integrated Education Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the correspondent indicating that the Committee Stage of the Bill finished on 24 November 2021 and referring them to the Committee Report on the Bill.

5.10 The Committee noted correspondence from Drumachose Primary School regarding concerns on the Integrated Education Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the correspondent indicating that the Committee Stage of the Bill finished on 24 November 2021 and referring them to the Committee Report on the Bill.

5.11 to 5.28 and 5.30 to 5.43 The Committee noted 32 items of correspondence from individuals regarding concerns on the Integrated Education Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the correspondents indicating that the Committee Stage of the Bill finished on 24 November 2021 and referring them to the Committee Report on the Bill.

5.29 The Committee noted correspondence from Thompson Primary School Board of Governors regarding concerns on the Integrated Education Bill.



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Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the correspondent indicating that the Committee Stage of the Bill finished on 24 November 2021 and referring them to the Committee Report on the Bill.

5.44 The Committee noted the General Teaching Council (Directions) Bill as introduced.

5.45 The Committee noted the explanatory and financial memorandum for the General Teaching Council (Directions) Bill.

5.46 The Committee noted correspondence from the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council providing its views on the Period Products (Free Provision) Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Bill's sponsor.

5.47 The Committee noted correspondence regarding delays to the roll-out of the Department of Education's Happy Healthy Minds Pilot.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking a response to the issues raised and an update on the pilot scheme.

6. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered its Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its forward work programme as amended.

7. Future Schools Project - Oral Briefing on the work of the Future Schools Project.

The Committee noted a briefing paper from Future Schools Project and a Community Conversation Toolkit produced by Ulster University.

The following witnesses joined the meeting by video conference at 9:57am:



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Dr Una O'Connor Bones, Senior Lecturer, Ulster University

Dr Jessica Bates, Senior Lecturer, Ulster University

Dr Stephen Roulston, Course Director, Ulster University

Mr Andrew Norrie, Parental Engagement Campaign Manager, Integrated Education Fund

The witnesses briefed the Committee on the work of the Future Schools Project.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

Mr Harvey left the meeting at 10:58am.

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for the briefing.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister of Education asking how the work of the Future schools Project would be imbedded and mainstreamed in the Area Planning System.

8. Big Parenting Survey 2021 - Oral Briefing from Parenting NI

The following witnesses joined the meeting by video conference at 11:09am:

Ms Charlene Brooks, Chief Executive Officer, Parenting NI

Mr Conal Baxter, Senior Policy and Research Officer, Parenting NI

The witnesses briefed the Committee on the Big Parenting Survey 2021.

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 highlighting the issues raised in the report and asking how it will be contributing to the Cross Departmental Family and Parenting Support Strategy.



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Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the report to the Department of Health and the Department for Communities highlighting the issues raised in it and seeking their views on these.

9. Department of Education Draft Budget 2022-2025 - Committee Consideration

The Committee noted:

- Correspondence from the Minister of Finance on the Education Budget;
- Correspondence from the Committee for Finance on the Draft Budget 2022-25;
- Hansard of a Department of Education briefing on the January Monitoring Round 2022 and Budget 2022-25 on 19 January 2022;
- A briefing paper from Department of Education on January Monitoring 2021-22;
- Responses to the Committee's call for views on the draft budget from the Controlled Schools' Support Council, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, NASUWT and the Education Authority; and
- Correspondence from the Committee for Finance on Estimates Memoranda 2021-22.

The Committee discussed the evidence taken in its consideration of the draft budget.

Agreed: The Committee agreed a response to the Committee for Finance on the draft 2022-25 budget.

10. Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.



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11. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next formal Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 23 February 2022 by video conference at 9:00am.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:06pm.

Chris Lyttle MLA

**Chairperson, Committee for Education
23 February 2022**