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## Review Panel Launches Public Survey

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The Panel for the Independent Review of Education has launched a survey for all those who wish to express their views on the current education system. Further information is available [here](#). The survey closes on **4<sup>th</sup> February 2022**.

The Panel is expected to deliver an interim report in October 2022 and a final report by April 2023. For more information about the review in general, including the Terms of Reference, please click [here](#).

The GBA met with the Panel in October 2021 for an initial discussion and has since submitted a [Summary Position Statement](#) and a paper on the [Voluntary Principle](#). We will have continued engagement with the panel as the review progresses.

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## Northern Ireland Draft Budget Announced

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The Department of Finance is welcoming views on the 2022-25 Draft Budget.

The document and consultation survey are available [here](#).

With a constrained financial position, growing demand and the effects of Covid-19, public services are facing very significant challenges going forward.

The GBA is deeply concerned about proposed cuts to the Education Budget and the detrimental effect this would have if implemented. We will be developing a response to the consultation and would encourage you and your wider school community to take part. We have also compiled a short form to ascertain your views specifically on the Education Budget. To access the form, please click [here](#).



# Northern Ireland Assembly Updates

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## Minister's Questions 06/12/21

At this Month's Education Question Time session, Education Minister, Michelle McIlveen, answered questions on a number of areas, these included:

- Admissions criteria for voluntary grammar schools.
- Covid-19 guidance
- Safer Schools NI app
- Support for young carers
- Education budget

Regarding admissions criteria, Ms Sinéad Bradley of the SDLP, asked what assessment the Minister had undertaken following a recent court ruling that a grammar school's admissions criteria was unlawful. The Minister explained that her Department has written to all post-primary schools to draw to their attention the court's judgement and to advise that such an admissions criterion or any similar criterion should not be used. Post primary admissions criteria have since been submitted to the Department.

The Minister was also asked to outline the impact that a reduction in her Department's budget will have for the incoming financial year. The Minister said:

*"... based on the current planning assumptions, at least £350m would be required by the Department if we are to avoid a hugely detrimental impact on the education and wellbeing of our children and young people...I will continue to emphasise the issues to the Finance Minister as I work with him and other Executive colleagues in seeking to secure the necessary funding for Education over the next three years...Without significant additional funding, the budget position for the Department of Education is therefore likely to continue to be extremely challenging..."*

The full list of the latest Minister's questions for oral answer is available [here](#).

## Education Committee

The Committee met last week and received briefings from the the Northern Ireland Teaching Council (NITC) and the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) on covid-19 safety in schools and staff shortages. Members will meet again today (15th December) to hear an oral briefing from the Independent Review of Education Panel. Following this, an oral briefing on Special Schools Area Planning will be provided by the Education Authority. Once uploaded, you can view the Committee sessions [here](#).



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## Shared Education

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The EA has received a number of expressions of interest from schools who wish to become engaged in Shared Education and is now collating the list of schools to begin the process of forming partnerships.

Over the next 18 months there will be a focus on three key areas for the new schools:

- **Building Leadership Capacity** – this will focus on developing principals and middle leaders to support Shared Education Partnership working
- **Teacher Professional Learning** – This will help develop the skills required, by teachers, to plan, implement and evaluate high quality Shared Education

- **Planning for Pupil Engagement** – This will explore the collaborative planning process involved in the development of Shared Education Programmes

If you require any further information regarding Shared Education projects, [please get in touch](#).



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## Area Planning

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As you will be aware, the GBA represents voluntary grammar schools on the various Area Planning Groups (Area Planning Steering Group, Area Planning Working Group and the Area Planning Local Groups). Discussions regarding the next Strategic Area Plan are underway. If you have any ideas for area solutions in your location (**including longer term solutions**) please [contact us](#).

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## **GBA Christmas Closure dates 2021**

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The GBA office will be closed on:  
**Friday 17th & Monday 20th December,**

We will be open on Tuesday 21st December and close again **from 12.30pm on Wednesday 22nd December.**

We will re-open as normal on Wednesday 5th January 2022.

Thank you to all our schools for their commitment and continued engagement

with us throughout 2021. We would like to take this opportunity to wish you a peaceful Christmas and warmest wishes for 2022.

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## Teaching & Non-Teaching Vacancies

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The GBA provides a free advertising service for our member schools. Job vacancies are posted on our website and Twitter page. There is also a link to our job listings on the Education Authority website in the job opportunities section.

**As we are currently receiving a high volume of job requests, please use our [job template](#) and allow one working day for posts to be uploaded. This does not include bank holidays and weekends.**

If you would like us to host a vacancy for your school, please [contact us](#).

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## Newsletter Subscription

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Please feel free to forward our monthly updates to your school Governors. If any of your Governors would like to subscribe, please [send us](#) their email address.

If you wish to unsubscribe to these emails, please [let us know](#).

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POLICY FORUM  
FOR NORTHERN  
IRELAND

# NEXT STEPS FOR THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN NI AND KEY PRIORITIES FOR THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW

## Policy Forum for Northern Ireland

ONLINE CONFERENCE

Morning, Tuesday 22nd March 2022

#POLICYNI

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