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## Education Authority Announces Multimillion Pound Tender

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The Education Authority (EA) has published a tender for Strategic Partner Services and Schools Management System Solution. The contract, estimated to be worth over £485 million, will be awarded through the EA EdIS Programme, a transformational change programme that represents a significant £750m investment that will support the learning experience for children and young people over the next 10 years.

The Strategic Partner, procured through this tender, will provide services including a School Management System (SMS) for Nursery, Primary, Post Primary, Special schools and EOTAS centres; and will be required to deploy, support and manage a modern architecture, technical infrastructure and secure services for schools.



**EdIS**  
Delivering Solutions  
for Education



The EdIS programme also includes finance and payroll replacement solutions for Voluntary Grammar schools. The EA is engaging with voluntary grammar representatives to ensure their future needs are met.

For more information and to keep up to date with the progress of the EdIS Programme please click [here](#).

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## **ESRI Publishes Study Examining Educational Systems and Outcomes in Ireland and Northern Ireland**

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The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) recently published their report, "A North-South Comparison of Education and Training Systems: Lessons for Policy" (April, 2022), to document commonalities and differences between the education systems in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The study draws on various local and international data sources, and incorporates a qualitative element to which the GBA contributed via interview and attendance at a stakeholder consultation event.

The ESRI researchers state: "Remarkably, it is the first study to systematically compare the systems from primary to tertiary levels and it is hoped that the findings will provide insights for future policy learning in both jurisdictions. The study is timely given the independent review of education being conducted in

Northern Ireland and ongoing reviews, especially at primary and upper secondary levels, in Ireland."

Some of the key findings, as documented in the report, include:

- Ireland and Northern Ireland perform well in international comparisons of skill development at primary and secondary levels. The two jurisdictions have broadly comparable patterns of skill development and similar patterns are evident by social background, indicating comparable levels of inequality in skill development.
- Existing research studies and stakeholder interviews have highlighted the 'high stakes' nature of the assessment systems in both jurisdictions, as well as the role of the backwash effect in narrowing the range of skills and capacities developed by young people.
- The two systems share some similarities in the orientation of secondary students towards higher education and the perceived 'second-best' nature of further education. The view that higher education and the labour market are the two main options for school leavers may be detrimental in the long-term for those who choose to leave education at this point.
- However, important differences occur across the two jurisdictions in terms of the configuration of post-school opportunities within the broader educational landscape. Stakeholders highlighted recent policy developments in Ireland they feel will help improve the perceived status of further education. Stakeholders in Northern Ireland emphasised the challenges of having a multiplicity of providers and duplication of courses

The full report can be accessed [here](#).



## Political Update

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Sinn Féin has tabled a petition to recall the assembly in a bid to elect a new Stormont speaker. A petition requires the signatures of 30 assembly members to pass. [BBC News NI](#) reports, "It is not clear yet if other parties will support the bid.

Without the election of a Speaker and nominations for First Minister and Deputy First Minister, the Northern Ireland Assembly will continue to exist in a caretaker capacity. Any significant, controversial or cross-cutting issues require the approval of the full executive. The caretaking role could continue for up to six months, while there would be negotiations to try to find a solution to the nomination of First and Deputy First Ministers.

The majority of the Ministers who were in place before the election will remain which includes Education Minister, Michelle McIlveen. Sinn Féin's John O'Dowd has been appointed as Northern Ireland's new Infrastructure Minister and replaces the Social Democratic and Labour Party's (SDLP) Nichola Mallon, who lost her seat in the recent Assembly election.

Questions for written answer continue to be published on the NI Assembly website and are available [here](#). The purpose of Assembly Questions is to ask for information or to press for action. The latest education questions include topics such as:

- The impact of the Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.
- The education budget and funding pressures.
- Availability of Classroom Assistants.
- Support for students eligible for free school meals.
- Mental Health support.

Weekly written answers are usually published on a Friday and are available [here](#).



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## Funding Opportunities

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### **2022 Royal Institution Science in Schools Grant Scheme**

Ri Science in Schools grants are awarded annually and offer free visits from their professional presenters worth £800. Applications are open until Midnight on Tuesday 31st May 2022. For more information about the scheme and to apply, please click [here](#).

### **UK-German Connection**

Find or continue your partnership with a school in Germany through a UK-German Connection grant to support a range of joint activities, visits and projects. For more information, please click [here](#).

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## Area Planning Update

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The Education Authority has undertaken consultation on the draft Strategic Area Plan and draft Special Education Strategic Area Plan 2022-2027 which closed on 12 April 2022. The final Plans are currently being prepared to be submitted to the Department of Education for launch in June 2022.

The Strategic plans will be accompanied by two, two-year Operational Plans that will be published, also, with the first operational plan running from September 2022 to August 2024.

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). If you would like to discuss education provision in your area, please [contact us](#) for an initial conversation.

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## Shared Education

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Please click on the graphic below for the latest report from The Department of Education on Shared Education.



If you would like to discuss Shared Education projects, please [contact us](#).

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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 or to subscribe, please use this [link](#).

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

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## Queen's Platinum Jubilee - GBA Office Closure Dates

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Please note that the GBA office will be closed from Wednesday 1st June 2022 until Friday 3rd June 2022 (inclusive) to facilitate the bank holidays and staff leave.

The office will reopen as normal on Monday 6th June 2022.

## School Contact Details

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We are currently updating our databases so that we have accurate and up to date details for our member schools.

**If there have been any recent changes to Principal, Chair of Board of Governors or Bursar posts, or any other significant changes, please [contact us](#) and let us know.**

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