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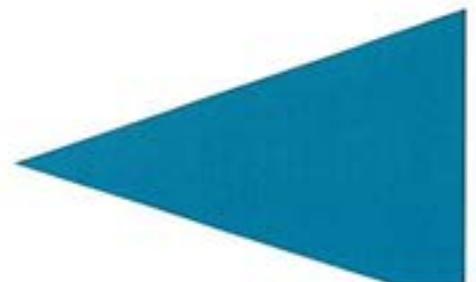
Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
Phoirt Láirge agus Loch Garman
*Waterford and Wexford
Education and Training Board*

Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board

MINUTES

Of Meeting Held 11th January 2022

*Held via Microsoft Teams,
Tuesday, 11th January 2022 at 4.00p.m.*



Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board **Minutes of Meeting held 11th January 2022 at 4.00p.m.**

Board Members in attendance: *Cllr. Barbara-Anne Murphy (Chairperson presiding), Mr. Richard Byrnes, Cllr. Tom Cronin, Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan, Ms. Margaret Darrer, Cllr. Mary Farrell, Cllr. Garry Laffan, Mr. Senan Lillis, Ms. Kate Miskella, Cllr. Pat Nugent, Cllr. Frank Quinlan, Mr. Pat Rath, Ms. Mary Ryan.*

Also in attendance: *Mr. Kevin Lewis, Chief Executive; Dr. Karina Daly, Director of Organisation Support and Development; Mr. Owen O'Mahony, Finance Officer; Ms. Eimear Ryan, Director of Schools; Mr. Ken Whyte, Director of Further Education and Training; Mr. Fintan O'Reilly, Corporate Services Manager, Mr. Michael O'Brien, Innovation and Development Manager.*

Presentations made to the Board by: *Ms. Sinéad O'Hara, WWETB Education Co-ordinator; Ms. Joann Power, Learning Support (Apprentices) and Skills for Work Coordinator.*

Apologies: *Cllr. Aidan Browne, Ms. Sandra Fogarty, Cllr. Leonard Kelly, Cllr. Fionntán Ó'Súilleabháin, Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan, Cllr. Cristiona Kiely. Ms. Anne-Marie Jones, HR Manager.*

The meeting was conducted remotely using Microsoft Teams due to COVID-19 restrictions and advised to the Board in advance.

110122.01 WELCOME AND GENERAL

The Chairperson welcomed all present and outlined relevant meeting protocols to the Board. Confidentiality on all matters was emphasised, including restrictions on the release of press-media communications until agreed by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairperson.

110122.02 CONFLICT OF INTEREST - DECLARATIONS

Conflict of Interest Declaration Forms were issued to the Board for their signature and return *(in order to fulfil requirements as set out in CL0002/2019 Code of Practice for the Governance of Education and Training Boards)*. No conflicts of interest were declared.

110122.03 CONDOLENCES

The Board extended sympathy to the following on their bereavements:

- ~ *The wife and family of Mr. Gerard Kehoe;*
- ~ *The family of Ms. Lorraine Bolger;*
- ~ *The wife and family of Mr. Pat Purcell;*
- ~ *Ms. Noeleen Murphy on the death of her father Mr. Ollie Hearne;*
- ~ *Mr. Dominic Hearne on the death of his father Mr. Ollie Hearne;*
- ~ *The parents and family of student Francis Kaldi Quinlan;*
- ~ *Mr. Adrian Power on the death of his father Mr. Tony Power;*
- ~ *Mr. Kevin Lewis on the death of his father-in-law Mr. Martin McMahon;*
- ~ *Ms. Ann Marshall on the death of her son Mr. Noel Marshall;*
- ~ *Ms. Aileen Ormonde on the death of her father Mr. Jack Higginbotham.*
- ~ *Mr. Mick Creane on the death of his mother Ms. Betty Creane.*

110122.04 CONGRATULATIONS

The Board extended congratulations to Dr. Karina Daly on publication of her book: 'The History of Wexford Festival Opera 1951-2021.

110122.05 COVID-19 RESPONSE - UPDATES

A brief verbal presentation was made on the current situation in relation to the COVID-19 Response.

Schools: The Director of Schools gave data on the average pupil attendances following schools re-opening 6th January 2022 and which was broadly in line with the national average.

Following a meeting and discussions between the Director of Schools, Chief Executive and School Principals, a Delegation Order was issued to principals which authorised them to manage school attendance and opening patterns safely and efficiently while the prevalence of Covid-19 remained high. The Director of Schools gave an outline of the Delegation Order (Ref. Education and Training Boards Act 2013, Section 16: Delegation of functions of Chief Executive) process and procedure which permitted decision making at a local level for school principals in line with their particular circumstances while the incidence of Covid-19 remained very high.

To date only one school exercised the Delegation Order and the Director of Schools gave a snapshot of the level and range of staff absenteeism in the various schools. Overall, principals are successfully continuing to manage the operation of schools as safely and efficiently as possible in the prevailing Covid-19 situation with more updates to follow during the week.

Further Education and Training (FET)

The Director of FET referred to meetings of the National Stakeholder Group and the WWETB Covid Managers who met 10th January and he gave a brief summary.

He reported that PLC attendance numbers were low with one school proposing a return to online teaching for the non-practical elements; Youthreach numbers attending were good with VTOS numbers fluctuating; Training Centre remained open, and no issues reported.

He responded to query from Cllr. Tom Cronin regarding several applicants who had not commenced their apprenticeship to date; the delay relates to apprenticeship courses running approximately 12 months behind and successful applicants are called centrally by SOLAS.

110122.06 MINUTES

The minutes of Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board (WWETB) meeting held on the 16th November 2021 were adopted; Proposed Ms. Kate Miskella; Seconded: Ms. Mary Ryan.

110122.07 FINANCE

(a) **Finance Report:** The Finance Officer presented the finance summary to the Board which was circulated in advance indicating the various balances. He presented the figures including percentage utilised versus the Service Plan and closing balance. The Receipts figure represented 91% utilisation of Service Plan, payments represented 84% of expected amount for the Service Plan as listed on the summary as at 30th November 2021. Cash flows have been strong, and no negative interest arose. Work is ongoing on the final year-end figures for December 2021 and will be ready for presentation at the next Finance Committee meeting. Growth on 2020 figures on average of approximately 7% during 2021 was reported despite the challenges of Covid-19.

He gave updates on various other finance activities including a new online budget ledger system launched in 2021 visible to schools and centre managers.

(b) **New banking facilities:** The Finance Officer presented two proposals to the Board for consideration in relation to the establishment of two new banking/financial facilities:

(i) **Stripe** - online intermediary banking services provider. Shielbaggan Outdoor Education and Training Centre is developing a new website and course booking system and an opportunity exists to accept receipts online/payments. Having consulted across the sector the Stripe payment facility which has worked successfully in another ETB was reviewed and is considered suitable for implementation in this case.

The Board adopted the proposal for the use of payments application 'Stripe' for the purposes outlined: adopted Cllr. Kathleen Codd Nolan; Seconded Mr. Senan Lillis.

- (ii) **Fexco:** provider of foreign exchange and international payment services. Foreign payments for WWETB's schools and centres are currently made via direct bank transfer from WWETB's account. The 'Fexco' service is already in use by WWETB Training Services and a new Fexco account will streamline the process for all such payments. Fexco is used across the sector and follows the standard process used in several other ETBs in advance of the transition to Finance Shared Services. The Board adopted the proposal to open a new Fexco Account as outlined: Mr. Senan Lillis; Seconded Ms. Mary Ryan.

110122.08 CORRESPONDENCE

- (a) **Gorey Community School – Trusteeship:** Letter of 6th December 2021 from *Loreto Education Trust* was brought to the attention of the Board. The CE outlined content of correspondence which advised of the Loreto Education Trust's engagement in discussions in relation to joining an amalgamated trust. It was noted that the Loreto Education Trust is in exploratory conversations with the Le Chéile Education Trust. He explained aspects involved and the current partnership arrangements and a brief discussion took place. The existing links and relationship with Le Chéile on the Ramsgrange Community School Board of Management was acknowledged.

110122.09 GOVERNANCE

The following reports of the Audit and Risk Committee and Finance Committee meetings were noted:

- (a) **Audit and Risk Committee:** Report of meeting held 1st December 2021 was circulated and the CE gave an overview of the report. The report referred to various matters and some topics highlighted included:
- Attendance of WWETB Chairperson at Audit and Risk Committee meeting;
 - Progress on Internal Audit Unit (IAU) Updates on Safety Health and Welfare Audit, Local Training Initiative (LTI) Audit, Human Resources (HR), CTC Audit. The IAU Schedule 2022 is not yet finalised.
 - C&AG External Audit: the 2020 Audit was closed off and the CE thanked everyone involved for a positive audit outcome, the next 2021 audit is due to commence in May.
 - Risk Register: current status update by the Corporate Services (CS) Manager.
 - Director of Schools gave a presentation: 'Briefing Audit and Risk Committee 2021' and highlighted challenges.
 - Policies, Corporate Procurement Plan (CPP) and Multi-annual Procurement Plan (MAPP) were noted by the Committee.
- The Chairperson thanked the Audit and Risk Committee for their work and the meeting invitation.
- (b) **Finance Committee:** Report of meeting held 8th December 2021 was circulated to the Board and the Chairperson read the report to the Board. The Report covered a number of matters including a presentation by the Finance Officer on Parent Associations' funds/accounts, Financial Report Service Plan to actual Q3 2021, 'Value for Money' Report (Lease Premises presentation by the CS Manager) and a Procurement process overview – procurement department. The Committee also noted the CPP AND MAPP which the CS Manager presented. The Chairperson confirmed her intention to attend future meetings of the Committee if invited to do so. The CS Manager responded to a query from Mr. Senan Lillis on value for money in procurement and the local element as regards ordering of goods and services.

He referred to the procurement presentation made at the Finance Committee meeting which gave an overview of the Procurement department. He acknowledged that challenges exist with the procurement process and in relation to local value for money, gaps exist which the national procurement policy does not cater for.

Work is ongoing at a local level, and he gave an example. The Director of OSD advised of commitment to supporting schools in running competitions in relation to buses.

(c) **Approval/Renewal of Leases: *Techniform Building, Waterford.***

The CE confirmed progress on the Techniform lease and outlined some of the relevant documents in place include an Agreement for Lease, Licence Agent, Lease Agreement and Site and recovery of payments for refitting costs.

He gave a general overview of the lease elements and complexities and extended his appreciation to the Corporate Services Manager and Director of FET for working a solution.

(d) **Board Self Evaluation Report:** As part of the obligations under the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs, Board members are required to complete a self-assessment evaluation questionnaire annually by entering a rating ('score') for 34 questions under various governance headings with an option to comment on what could be done differently. A total of twenty responses were received to the questionnaire and the Director of OSD began her presentation: 'WWETB Board Self Evaluation' which was shared onscreen and gave an overview of the combined scores and answers.

In addition to the scoring, she listed some of the feedback returned through the questionnaire which included:

- o Documentation to be circulated to Board members a minimum of five days in advance of Board meetings;
- o Short list of Reserved functions of the Board;
- o Presentations from the different WWETB staff very informative;
- o Learning curve very steep, more mentoring; understanding may vary among members;
- o Regular short governance training once a year;
- o Board of Management training excellent;
- o Self-evaluation form could be improved.

The Director of OSD thanked the members for their input to the evaluation and members of the Board were invited to comment. The Board accepted the report of the Board self-assessment evaluation questionnaire: Proposed Cllr. Garry Laffan; Seconded Cllr. Tom Cronin.

The CE thanked the board for completion of the evaluation and advised that the template originated as an appendix in the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs, agreed at a national level.

The Chairperson highlighted early circulation of meeting documentation, training for board members and acknowledged the steep learning curve especially for new members and perhaps a little more induction at that stage may be helpful.

Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan noted comments and informed the Board that ETBI training is being organised for board, audit and risk and finance committee members.

(e) **Designated Directorships - Statement of Interests:** WWETB is comprehended by the Ethics in Public Office Act 1995 & Standards in Public Office Act 2001 and accordingly Board Members are requested to complete a declaration form. The Chairperson and CE would appreciate members completion and return of declarations as forwarded recently.

- (f) **Corporate Procurement Plan (CPP) and the Multi-Annual Procurement Plan (MAPP)**
The Corporate Services Manager confirmed both plans were presented to the Finance and Audit and Risk Committees. The Plan prepared in September was submitted to ETBI which will inform them with a view to any national level procurement.

110122.10 NOMINATIONS/MEMBERSHIP TO BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT AND COMMITTEE

Dungarvan College-Coláiste Dhún Garbhán: The Board appointed **Mr. Ray Moore** (Parent Representative, Male) to the Board of Management at Dungarvan College-Coláiste Dhún Garbhán.

Proposed: Cllr. Pat Nugent; Seconded Cllr. Tom Cronin.

110122.11 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT (Summary and Finance Report)

- (a) **Chief Executive's Report:** The Chairperson informed the Board that from now on the Chief Executive's Report will be issued in **February, May, September and November**. A Finance Report will continue to be provided at each board meeting.
The development of the 2023-27 Strategic Statement is underway – the Strategy Statement 2018-2022 expires this year; the Director of OSD was invited to give a brief presentation on the strategy statement.
- (b) **WWETB Strategy Development 2023-2027:**
Preparatory work has commenced on the new Strategy Statement which will run from 2023-2027 and the Director of OSD explained the early-stage key starting point of reflection and rating of progress on the Strategy Statement 2018-2022. A report is being compiled on the implementation of the current strategy statement which will indicate progress and areas of priority that have been completed.

Some of the landscape changes by 2027 and beyond will affect the new strategic cycle and key questions arise as regards vision, mission, and core values. The aim is to put together a structure for a strategy which is achievable and ambitious and receive inputs from all stakeholders for ultimate approval by the Board of WWETB.

On initial review a thematic approach is being considered in line with themes which emerged since the last strategic plan and some suggested headings and themes included:

- Quality – in the implementation of frameworks, new training programmes, organisation services and fundamentally student and learner success. Reference was made to recent worthwhile Statutory Review of FET quality assurance.
- Colleges and Schools of the Future.
- Technology Enhanced Learning – much progress has been made but ICT remains significantly underfunded.
- Communications – a Communications Steering Group is in place in the organisation and need to build on its marketing, PR, and partnerships
- Health and Wellbeing – spans students, learners, and staff. Current programmes offered can provide a beneficial positive impact; the development of other approaches such as resilience building is desirable.
- Energy and the Environment – progressing and several external partners key to success in this area.

The development of the Strategy Statement will comprise a Working Group for each thematic area, with Project Lead (Senior Manager) and 4 meetings per thematic area between now and July 2022 with a proposed timeline: Focus group session with the Board in May 2022, presentation to the Board – September 2022, Draft Strategic Statement to the Board November 2022 and Board sign off on Strategy Statement of January 2023. Consultation process to follow standard format used previously with focus group sessions and surveys.

Board Members are welcome to engage in any of the working groups and to inform the Director of OSD of areas of particular interest to them. She emphasised that this is a proposed structure, input was welcomed and any of the thematic headings can and will change as the process evolves.

Mr. Senan Lillis complimented the Director of OSD and wished her and the team well and volunteered to assist if required.

Cllr. Mary Farrell seconded this and volunteered to be involved in the Environment section of the strategy.

110122.12 CIRCULAR LETTERS – Department of Education

{available: <https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/>}. The following Circular Letters were adopted: Proposed Ms. Mary Ryan; Seconded Ms. Kate Miskella.

- (a) 0065/2021: Enhanced Minor Works Grant Funding for Primary Schools, Exceptional Minor Works Grant Funding for Post-Primary Schools with a particular focus on supporting enhanced ventilation.
- (b) 0064/2021: Changes to the Domestic Subsistence Rates Effective from 01 December 2021 Payable to Staff in Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and members of ETBs and of ETB Statutory Committees.
- (c) 0063/2021: Final closing date of 30 April 2022 for receipt of eligible qualification allowance applications (as a Result of the Findings of the Adjudicator under Claim 447/19).
- (d) 0062/2021: Appeal System for Permanent Principal and Deputy Principal Appointments.
- (e) 0061/2021: Study and examination leave for staff other than persons employed as teachers and special needs assistants employed in education and training boards.
- (f) 0060/2021: Grant Scheme for EU NRRP Funding to schools to address the digital divide, and learners at risk of educational disadvantage.
- (g) 0059/2021: Arrangements for the implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle with particular reference to the school year 2021/22.
- (h) 0058/2021: Payment of Tool Allowance to Craft Workers – 2021.
- (i) 0057/2021: Panel access for fixed-term/temporary (this includes substitute) and part-time teachers to the Supplementary Redeployment Panel for the 2022/23 school year.

110122.13 PRESENTATIONS

- (a) *Presentation: "Inclusion mapping for SEN in Schools"*.

Ms. Sinéad O Hara, WWETB Education Co-ordinator thanked the Board and outlined her role and work with the Director of Schools giving a brief overview of strategic priorities including links with teams and multi-agency collaborations. The Education Co-ordinator shared her presentation on-screen: *'Provision Mapping – using the school self-evaluation process to review and map inclusive and special education provision in our post primary schools'* and some items outlined included the following:

- *Communities of Practice*: Programmes of CPD; biodiversity modules recently launched available to schools and further education and training.
- *Development of Policies and Plans*: one of the only ETBs to offer comprehensive summer CPD programme to SNAs.
- *Internal collaboration*: maintain links with 'Youthwork Affairs' and work with the Innovation and Development Manager and Multi Agency Committee projects relevant to schools.
- *External representations*: range of multi-agency committees. Recent project launch of on-line training module on Restorative Practices for schools and congratulations to staff and students of Selskar College on their participation as the voice actors in the training videos.

- *Research:* The award of a John Coolahan Research Bursary from The Teaching Council enabled her carry out evaluative research on the past five years of WWETB's Magenta Principles and completed a thesis on SENCO Communities of Practice.

Provision mapping Programme

In response to recent changes to educational policy, schools are invited to participate in a process to support further development of a schoolwide systematic, collaborative, and collective approach to inclusive and special education. The Provision Mapping process provides a basis to strategically plan provision, build systems, allocate resources, and identify staff CPD needs, and the benefits were outlined.

The pilot phase lasts approximately two years, and the Inclusion Coach works closely with a school team and this team then works with Dr. Johanna Fitzgerald, Head of Educational Psychology, Inclusive and Special Education & Senior Lecturer, Mary Immaculate College. The Education Co-ordinator is a member of the ETBI Strategic Priority Group and is training as an Inclusion Coach.

The Education Co-ordinator displayed a planning overview document: Preventative, Proactive & Solution Focused Whole School Approaches to Inclusive & Special Education (Planning Overview) acknowledging the SENCO Team collaborations and a "MIC Post Primary Provision map where provisions are grouped per presenting need rather than any category of diagnosis. Once a Provision Map is completed it is included in the Appendices of Whole School Inclusion Policy and can be easily amended year to year. She thanked the SENCO group and Dr. Johanna Fitzgerald and stated that the current plan gives an opportunity to review and input; training and resource materials will be shared with all WWETB schools.

The Education Co-ordinator expressed confidence that participation in this project will further showcase the exceptional provisions in WWETB schools for learners with additional needs that have always been to the fore in ETB schools and demonstrated inclusivity. A copy of the presentation will be made available to the Board after the meeting.

The Chairperson thanked the Education Co-ordinator for her comprehensive presentation and insight and invited questions or comments.

The Innovation and Development Manager outlined involvement on a project with the Education Co-ordinator on the development of Biodiversity modules in conjunction with the National Biodiversity Data Centre for learners in our schools and centres. Future plans include examining a Pollinator Programme matching with the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan on how WWETB can lead organisations in terms of addressing biodiversity. He paid tribute to the Education Co-ordinator for her work and in the rollout of NZEB training to 'Building Construction' teachers which NCCA are cooperating with.

The CE extended his appreciation to the Education Co-ordinator for her work and innovation especially with the Communities of Practice. He also congratulated her on her further studies and continued work in this area.

(b) *Presentation: "Learning supports for apprentices"*

Ms. Joann Power, Learning Support (Apprentices) and Skills for Work Co-ordinator thanked the board for the opportunity which showcases the learning supports for apprenticeships in particular in WWETB. She began by outlining her background as an Adult Literacy Organiser for over 20 years - 17 years based in the Adult Literacy Service Waterford City where she engaged with a broad range of stakeholders and projects.

She explained the establishment of a learning support service for apprentices utilising best practice, building relationships, equity, and bespoke interventions made on an individual basis.

The overall vision of the Learner Support Service for Apprenticeship is to create a more inclusive environment for apprentices at Phase 2 and facilitate them to achieve positive learning outcomes, become more engaged and focused and as a result improve and reduce attainment inequality.

The aim is to establish a sustainable model of literacy, numeracy, and other additional supports (including mental health supports) for apprentices and working towards inclusion and embedding the universal design within the classroom and needs of the learners. She gave an overview of 'Speak Easy' and 'The Pod' which is a dedicated space for supporting individual and small group needs.

Assessments are specific to the vocational area. The importance of de-stigmatising literacy and mental health supports was emphasised. The referrals involve several internal stakeholders, and their engagement was vital. Embedding Technology is an important focus and ensures that those on the margins can engage on a level playing field. Work is involved in tailoring the system to fit all and for those with a negative school experience to ensure a positive experience as part of their further education experience.

Needs are broad ranging and despite challenges along the way she is confident of moving the service forward and transferring the good practices.

The Chairperson thanked the Learning Support/Skills for Work Coordinator for a very interesting presentation and noted the many ways apprentices are being supported.

Mr. Pat Rath complimented her presentation and welcomed the framework outlined. He asked how the process works regarding engagement with employers to raise the awareness level of working with persons with disabilities and how the employers engage and are supported to employ participants effectively and fully into the workplace.

The Co-ordinator responded that a Stakeholder List was developed which involves the Senior Training Advisors who advocate for the service and communicate with employers on a daily basis about the service available. Some of the employers will contact the service directly requesting an assessment of some of their employees to ascertain if they require supports.

It is very positive, and the Senior Training Advisors have a vital role in embedding the message. The Senior Training Advisors take this information to the Employer, and they connect if they have any support needs. The service is creating an awareness and de-stigmatising the seeking of support. She provided statistics from the first year of 60+ beneficiaries who accessed the services, increasing to 225 in year two and 330 in year three out of 670 apprentices (N.B. one learner may access more than one intervention).

The Innovation and Development Manager complimented the work of the Learning Support/Skills for Work Co-ordinator, and her Team and employers are starting to approach the service to seek supports for some of their staff and he stressed the importance also of offering support and breaking down any stigma with any of the issues.

The CE thanked the Learning Support/Skills for Work Co-ordinator also for the huge impact made in the last three years (and during her service in Waterford City) and as borne out by the beneficiary numbers. The level of involvement has increased, and he thanked the Director of FET for the vision he has shown in this regard. It was noted that workbooks are being created for use nationally and thanked all involved.

110122.14 BOARD/COMMITTEE REPORTS (including draft reports if not stated)

The following Board of Management reports were noted by the Board (Item 110122.18 also refers):

- (a) Board of Management Reports:
 - *Selskar College report of meeting held 1st December 2021;*
 - *Waterford College of Further Education report of meeting 1st December 2021, 20th May 2021.*
 - *Bridgetown College report of meeting 6th October 2021.*

110122.15 ETBI (Education and Training Boards Ireland)

- (a) *ETBI Brief 04: CAO FET Project.*
- (b) *ETBI Brief 05: SMIS Project.*
- (c) *ETBI Reserve Members Forum – Report.* Cllr. Kathleen Codd-Nolan gave a brief report of the last meeting held on the 15th December 2021. The following topics were referred to:
 - 1 Apprenticeships – a new National Apprenticeship Office will be set up.
 - 2 Governance Training roll out in the first and second quarter for members including refresher training and it will be available on-line so people may access at their convenience.
 - 3 General Secretary update: Payment for Interview Boards - The General Secretary continues to raise the matter and it was agreed that an ETBI delegation would meet with Minister of Public Expenditure and Reform Michael McGrath.
 - 4 The establishment of a Community National School in Tipperary was welcomed.

110122.16 PRESS RELEASES: Department of Education

[available: <https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2020-press-releases/>]. The following Press Releases were brought to the attention of the Board and noted:

- (a) Statement following meeting between Minister Foley and education stakeholders, 4 January 2022.
- (b) Ministers Foley and Ryan launch Schools Energy Retrofit Pathfinder Programme for 2022.
- (c) Ministers Foley and Harris publish Education Indicators for Ireland 2021 report.
- (d) Meeting held of Advisory Group on Planning for State Examinations 2022.
- (e) Minister Josepha Madigan launches review of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004.
- (f) Minister Foley announces consultation on second phase STEM Education Implementation Plan 2022-2026.
- (g) Minister Foley announces payment of €62 million minor works grant funding for primary, special and post-primary schools.
- (h) Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD & Education Minister Norma Foley TD announce successful projects under the Shared Island-SCoTENS research partnership.
- (i) Statement and updates from the Department of Education on Storm Barra.
- (j) Minister Foley announces issue of €50 million funding to primary and post-primary schools to address the digital divide, under Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan.
- (k) Ministers Foley and Harris co-sign joint statement to promote equal access to education for Afghan women and girls.

110122.17 PRESS RELEASES: Dept. of Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science

[available: https://www.gov.ie/en/search/?type=press_releases&organisation=department-of-higher-education-innovation-and-science]. The following Press Releases were brought to the attention of the Board and noted:

- (a) Minister Harris encourages those looking for a career change to visit The Right Course.
- (b) Minister Harris announces 17 new apprenticeship programmes will be developed in 2022.
- (c) Ministers Harris and Foley publish Education Indicators for Ireland 2021 report.

- (d) Minister Harris launches report on education inclusion for learners with intellectual disabilities.
- (e) Minister Harris announces new €2,000 support for apprenticeship employers.
- (f) Government allocated record levels to research and development in 2020 - Minister Harris.
- (g) Ministers Harris and McEntee launch awareness campaign on signs and dangers of 'spiking'.
- (h) Minister Harris announces €6.85m in additional funding to support the most educationally disadvantaged in Ireland.
- (i) Ministers McEntee and Harris launch Further Education and Training guide for domestic and sexual abuse victims.
- (j) Ministers Harris and McEntee launch Further Education and Training guide for domestic and sexual abuse victims.
- (k) Minister Harris launches new resources to help migrant learners improve their English language skills.
- (l) Statement on Storm Barra from DFHERIS - 8 December 2021.
- (m) Minister Harris announces €9 million fund to support antigen tests for students.
- (n) Statement from the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science on Storm Barra.
- (o) Minister Harris invites expressions of interest to fill Chairperson and Ordinary Members positions on the first Governing Body of the proposed new Technological University in the Southeast.
- (p) Ministers Harris and Foley co-sign joint statement to promote equal access to education for Afghan women and girls.
- (q) Adoption of new European Research Area policy framework welcomed by Minister Harris.
- (r) Minister Harris and OECD Secretary General Mathias Cormann announce plans for an examination of Ireland's Skills Strategy.

A number of board members left the meeting to facilitate attendance at another meeting.

110122.18 ADDENDUM

- (1) **Board/Committee Reports** (including draft reports)
The Enniscorthy Community College Board of Management Report of meeting held 19th October 2021 was noted by the Board (item 110122.14 also refers).

110122.19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- (a) The next meeting of WWETB is scheduled to take place on **Tuesday, 22nd February 2022.**
- (b) Draft Schedule of WWETB meeting dates 2022 was circulated and agreed. For circulation also to local authorities and Boards of Management.

110122.20 AOB

- (a) *Reception Centre, Clonea:* The Director of FET gave a general status report following request from Cllr. Pat Nugent for an update regarding the Centre. A new group of learners is accessing the services, the children's provision is fully staffed with Primary Teachers and teenagers attend Dungarvan College-Coláiste Dhún Garbhán.
- (b) *Presentations:* The Chairperson thanked all the presenters for their informative presentations and the Board for their co-operation and invited them to nominate areas of interest for future presentations if they so wished. She concluded by wishing everyone a happy new year.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

[Handwritten signature]
22/02/2022

Documents circulated:

*Agenda, Conflict of Interest Declaration Forms,
Minutes of WWETB meeting held 16th November 2021
Audit and Risk Committee Report 1st December 2021
Finance Committee Report 8th December 2021
Designated Directors – Statement of Interests form
Corporate Procurement Plan and MAPP 2021
Finance Report January 2022 and Finance Summary November 2021
Info. re Chief Executive's Report
ETBI Briefs 04 and 05 2021
Draft Schedule of meeting dates 2022
Addendum, Presentations for circulation after meeting x 2*