

# Dept of Education lists no plans for next four years



“The unfortunate thing about politics in this country is that when there’s a minister in a constituency, things are delivered and when there’s no [minister] there’s not. Look at Cork and Galway and all they got”, he said.

“If the planning permission of the Ursuline runs out - there’s been a lot of money spent. It’d be hugely embarrassing for us all if that happens, especially if there was a commitment made”.

Councillor Walsh also supported the motion, referencing Coola post primary school and the 22 additional classrooms that they were promised, but that they are still at the design stage with no financial allocation yet.

He said that he spoke to the Minister of Education last week about the issues of the Gaelscoil and the Ursuline school as he said that she has been very clear that “she does not have the budget necessary to fund additional schools”.

He said that they are still hoping nonetheless that an additional allocation will be given to the department of education. He also believes the sentiments of Cllr McSharry, that if there was a cabinet minister in the county they probably would have seen different results to the NDP.

Under the NDP nationally,

€7.755 billion has been allocated to the department of education for the current government between the years 2026-2030.

Independent councillor Joe Queenan also chimed in on this issue. He believes that around half of the figure given to the department of education is spent on architects, consultants and feasibility studies that “drags along” the process.

“The focus should be on the department to cut out the red tape. The consultants are making a fortune.”, he believes.

“The whole system is wrong. Unless we change the system at a national level - we’ll be back again this time next year”, he said.

Councillor Declan Bree also supported the motion.

He said that it’s amazing that “30 years after the gaelscoil has been established, it still doesn’t have a permanent home”.

He said that his daughter was in the very first class in the first year that the school set up in 1996, as he re-iterated how long this problem has persisted.

Councillor Gerard Mullaney said that he also supported the motion and was of the same opinion of Cllr Queenan as he said that “there’s too much money being spent on reports and it is

taking too long to get projects off the ground”.

Councillor Higgins echoed the thoughts of her council colleagues, as she said “it’s consistent that Sligo is left off lists be it transport or infrastructure, it’s like we do not exist”.

“All of our children deserve to be educated in modern buildings, not in leaky and cold pre-fabs - that’s not conducive to learning for either staff or students”, she said.

Sinn Féin’s councillor Gibbons supported the motion as he said that currently the state is saying that Irish speaking students are treated as “second class citizens”.

Cathaoirleach Dónal Gilroy said that the members should steer away from the “pettiness over some areas having senior ministers” and that this does not impact the allocations.

“We’re all devastated by it and Cá bhfuil ár scoil - that’s what we have to say” he said.

Councillor Nealon, who proposed the motion, refused the sentiments of some members of the council that were questioning the abilities of the Minister of Education.

He referenced Cllr Clarke’s comments saying: “You said what addition are these ministers? I say

what addition are you, Councillor Clarke?”.

He said that the government is bringing stakeholders together constructively and that there is a meeting scheduled next Wednesday for Gaelscoil Chnoc na Ré in Leinster House with Minister Naughton.

Nonetheless, the motion was passed for the council to write to Fine Gael’s Minister Naughton to push for the support of the gaelscoil, the Ursuline College and Grange Post Primary school’s much needed development.

**VIDEO REPORT**

 

The Sligo Weekender also this week published a video report from Gaelscoil Chnoc na Ré which further shows the scale of the issues being highlighted by the school. Cara McHugh spoke with staff and pupils for their first-hand stories on the challenges the school faces as a result of a lack of funding and support from the Department of Education.

  
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