

Northern Ireland 2018-19 Parents' Parliament.

(MUSIC)

Jayne Thompson – Parentkind NI

Good evening everyone a very warm welcome to each and every one of you the first Northern Ireland "Parents' Parliament". This evening we are gathered here in Bangor for the first groundbreaking Northern Ireland Parents' Parliament of where we're looking to bring our parents from an array of different sectors and across Primary School and Post-Primary School to talk about some of the issues which are impacting on their children's education on how they as parents can become more proactively engaged in their children's learning at home and at school and also with education policy.

Roisin McCreesh - CCEA

70% of parents said that they wanted to be consulted about the curriculum so CCEA felt that it was really important that we were involved in Parentkind's parliament so that relationships with parents in order to enable the curriculum in fullness in terms of developing the skills for every child.

Dale Heaney – Department of Education

The important part of tonight is to get your views on the questions that we've proposed for you. I have responsibility for the Department of Education's parental engagement, "Give Your Child a Helping Hand" and I felt this complemented that work very closely. So we would be supportive of any initiative which brings schools, parents and communities closer together and we think that "Parents' Parliament" has the capacity to do that.

Simon Bridge – MADE (Making a Difference in Education)

You've got to work with the teachers, the schools, with the parents, with the children, with the educational system and with society because each have an impact with what's going on and if you only work with one component of that the other impacts will undermine what you're doing.

Alison McCaw – Bright Owl Solutions

I wear several hats as a parent, I'm also a Governor, I also work with parents and children with additional needs and I think it's lovely that parents are being given an opportunity to find out what they don't know so it's lovely to see a range of parents here interested to know more and hopefully as a result of today they will go away unpowered to ask more questions.

Peter Weir MLA – Minister of Education

Well again I think it's about trying to develop that level of understanding to see for example where parents have concerns how they can be taken on board, how we, I suppose we should always be in a learning environment and how education can better be responsive to the needs of parents, also I suppose also to help enable parents maybe some of the constraints that are there in education as well.

Jayne Thompson – Parentkind NI

My hope for this evening is that we can hear parents voice loud and clear and that they can contribute meaningfully to the conversations that we're having around the table and that the discussions being presented to us by the Department of Education and by CCEA also so that we have that feedback from parents that will allow us to

translate that voice into policy at a later date.

Chris Lyttle MLA – Chairperson, Committee for Education

We know it's vital that parents are involved in educating. For their children, we know it achieves the best outcomes and it helps overcome barriers so I'm delighted to be here to support the work of Parentkind and the "Parents Parliament". I know that we've seen some great examples of giving a voice to parents of giving parents the skills they need to be informed about and to engage with education and then to harness those skills. It's been really glad to see good examples of that in terms of breakfast clubs, community gardens I've even seen parent training in Numeracy and Literacy to really help them to help their children with their homeworks and their learning and it's great to see this model being put in place.

(MUSIC)

Parent

This is very informative tonight and it's exactly what we need and be able to share, it's very important to be able to share all our information with the other schools, with other people so very much appreciated.

Jill Caskey – Integrated Education Fund

I thought it was really important because it was giving parents an opportunity to share their views to find out more about educational provision so whether it was the area planning or the curriculum and have debate and dialogue around each of those topics and I think bringing parents together from across the city is a really good way to share views and experiences and also pose some questions to the different

planning authorities as well about what their experiences have been and but what they'd like to see for their children too so.

Parent

My main reason for coming this evening is because I am a parent of five children, two who are at the older age of the education and three who are just going to be coming through it. So absolutely advocating for my children and making sure that parents have their voice and have their say.

Heather McKenzie – Controlled Schools Support Council (CSSC)

For parents to be involved and included in educational policies they need to be made aware of them. They need to be consulted on them and be able to respond to them as appropriate. The "Parents' Parliament" has provided that opportunity to engage with key stakeholders, to be able to feedback to them what parents are actually looking for. What they want to see from those different organisations to help them help their children.

Parent

I've really enjoyed the interactions from some of the other groups and it actually really occurred to me if there's school clusters there really should also be PTA clusters. It would be really nice to meet up with some of these other groups and you know try to learn from their experiences. I have really loved the interactions and I really appreciate the fact that the Department, the CCEA, they've all taken time out of their time, their schedule to meet us here tonight because quite often as a parent we

might be trying to engage with various authorities and it's very, very difficult and now we have a face to authority and I really appreciate that.

Jayne Thompson – Parentkind NI

So leaving you with this... schools are not an island they cannot teach alone as parents we want the best for our children but we do not know how we can be the best educators supporting learning being delivered in the classrooms.

Donna Hyland – QUB, The Graduate School

We were approached by parent kind and invited to come along and participate in the “Parents’ Parliament” and we just felt it was an absolutely wonderful opportunity for our post-graduate students to be exposed to the issues facing parents in both primary and secondary school. We’re delighted that we’ve had this opportunity, seeing the different stakeholders, hearing all the different voices, coming up with the creative ideas has been an absolutely wonderful day.

(MUSIC)