

**2022 ADVISORY GROUP ON PLANNING FOR STATE EXAMINATIONS**

**BY WEBEX, 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022**

**Draft Note of Meeting**

**Present**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation/Position</b>
<b>Minister for Education</b>	Norma Foley, TD	Minister for Education
<b>Joint Chair</b>	Dalton Tattan (DT)	Assistant Secretary General
<b>Joint Chair</b>	Andrea Feeney (AF)	Chief Executive Officer, SEC
<b>Students</b>	Emer Neville	President, ISSU
	Jack McGinn	Education Officer, ISSU
<b>Parents</b>		
	Mai Fanning	President, NPC-PP
<b>Teachers</b>	Eamon Dennehy	President, ASTI
	Kieran Christie	General Secretary, ASTI
	Martin Marjoram	President, TUI
	Michael Gillespie	General Secretary, TUI
<b>School managers and leaders</b>	John Curtis	General Secretary, JMB
	John Irwin	General Secretary, ACCS
	Paddy Lavelle	General Secretary, ETBI
	Paul Fields	Director of Schools, ETBI
	Paul Byrne	Deputy Director, NAPD
<b>NCCA</b>	Barry Slattery	Deputy CEO, NCCA
<b>State Examinations Commission</b>	Richard Dolan	SEC
	Elaine Sheridan	SEC
<b>Department of Education</b>	Harold Hislop	Chief Inspector
	Yvonne Keating	Deputy Chief Inspector
	Orlaith O'Connor	Assistant Chief Inspector
	Eamonn Moran	Principal Officer
	Paul Keating	Assistant Principal Officer
	Neville Kenny	Principal Officer

	Declan Power	Higher Executive Officer
	Aine Doyle	Advisor to Minister
	Anne Tansey	Director, NEPS
	Clodhna O'Neill	Principal Officer
<b>DFHERIS</b>	Niamh Devine	Assistant Principal Officer
<b>Higher Education</b>	Breda Corr	HEA (Observer)

## 1. Welcome

The Joint Chair (DT) welcomed the Minister and the members of the Advisory Group.

Apologies were given for Aine Lynch, NPC(P).

The Minister expressed her thanks to the Group for their work to date in relation to state examinations 2022 and what has been achieved in recent years through the engagement of the Group.

The Minister informed the Group that she had listened to all of the perspectives from all of the members of the Group, noting the bilateral meetings which she has attended, and had made the informed decision that the Leaving Certificate 2022 would take the form of an examinations only approach and would not be a hybrid model.

The Minister advised the Group that the Leaving Certificate for 2022 examinations would be radically different to previous years including, for example, greater choice and reduced content and additional time as a result.

The Minister advised the Group that for Leaving Certificate 2022 the option of accredited grades based on the same model for Leaving Certificate 2021 was not possible. This was for a number of reasons including the absence of Junior Cycle results for up to 25% of the students due to sit the Leaving Certificate 2022. No workable model had been put forward in terms of how best to solve the challenge of how to address the gaps that exist and provide a basis for fair and equitable accredited grades for all students.

Across the EU, it appeared that no other countries had planned accredited grades type arrangements for their state examinations 2022.

The Minister confirmed that the overall results of Leaving Certificate 2022 will on aggregate not be lower than in 2021. The Minister also advised that the Junior Cycle examinations were going ahead for the first time since 2019.

The Minister summarised that the decision announced provided clarity for students, teachers and parents. She again thanked the Advisory Group for their work and commitment to date and would be available to meet with any members of the Group over the coming days if needed.

The Joint Chair (DT) recapped on the decision by the Minister including references to the following:

- Written exams in 2022
- Past papers would provide familiarity for students
- Students would have more time to answer fewer questions
- Grade profile will on aggregate be no lower than 2021
- Contingency set of exams would be made available
- Junior Cycle examinations would run in 2022

## **2. Tour De Table – Updates Leaving Certificate 2022**

### **Response from the ISSU**

The ISSU expressed disappointment at the decision in light of the fact that the student voice had expressed a desire for a hybrid model in 2022 and uncertainty still existed on options for students unable to sit the exams due to Covid 19. ISSU expressed a wish to be involved in the proposed changes to the examinations 2022. They also advised that mental health was an issue amongst students. The running of the Junior Cycle in 2022 was seen as good news for students. The issue of confidentiality is becoming a challenge.

### **Response from parents' representatives**

The NPC-PP expressed disappointment at the decision not to run a hybrid model in 2022. There had been a clear mandate given from parents, through survey results, for a hybrid model in 2022 due to the effects of Covid 19 on the education system including students, teachers and parents. This mandate has not changed. The view was expressed that lessons have not been learnt over the past 3 years on reforming the Leaving Certificate examinations and there appears to be resistance to reform. All groups on the ground advocated for a hybrid model and it was very disappointing this could not be delivered upon for state examinations 2022.

### **Response from School Managers and Leaders**

The JMB/ACCS/ETBI/NAPD welcomed the clarity provided by the decision of the Minister and while understanding the views of other members of the Advisory Group, felt it was the correct decision under the circumstances and represented the fairest decision for all concerned, especially in light of gaps in Junior Cycle results for some students. It was generally felt that views had been listened to around the table in as much as was possible in order to make a decision. The decision should also help in addressing the challenge of students disengaging from schools now that clarity has been given. The clarification on the fact that grade inflation was being addressed and that the Junior Cycle was going ahead for 2022 was welcomed. It

was agreed that confidentiality is now an issue with information appearing the media in advance of announcements.

### **Response from the Teachers Unions**

While understanding the views of some members of the Advisory Group in relation to a hybrid model, ASTI/TUI welcomed and supported the decision announced by the Minister. There was no other concrete offer on the table to offer a solution to some of the issues identified, including the gap in Junior Cycle results. There was a need to ensure the integrity and status of the exams along with access to the exams and the decision taken by the Minister will support this, along with the fact that external assessment will continue to be crucial in order to ensure objectivity around the exams. The commitment by the Minister that the grade prolife will be in line with 2021 was welcomed and fair to students. There was an urgent need to issue updated details to schools as soon as possible in relation to the exams. The issue of the Mock Examinations was discussed and the fact that exams/project work in some subjects across LCA/LCVP/LC had already started. All welcomed the running of the Junior Cycle exams in 2022. They agreed with the confidentiality points made in the meeting.

### **Comments from the Minister**

The Minister appreciated the feedback from all of the members of the Group. The Minister was satisfied that the possibility of a hybrid model for state exams 2022 had been explored in full but the fact remained that gaps exist in the data so the decision taken is the fairest and most equitable one for all students under the circumstances.

### **Comments from the Joint Chairs**

The Joint Chair (DT) thanked everybody for their input.

The Joint Chair (DT) informed the Group that a Press Release in relation to the State Examinations 2022, would be issued shortly after the meeting and a copy sent to all Group members.

The Joint Chair (AF) informed the Group that the Department was available to follow up with individual members of the Group, if needed, over the coming days

## **3. AOB**

The Joint Chair (DT) concluded by thanking all members for their time, effort and commitments in order to ensure the Minister could make an informed decision in relation to the State Examinations 2022.

The Joint Chair (DT) supported the views of members of the Advisory Group when it comes to the need to respect the confidentiality of discussions within the Group.

## **4. Date of next meeting**

The Department will be in contact regarding a date for the next meeting.

**ENDS**

**Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit  
April 2022**