



A meeting of Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board was held on Tuesday 25 March 2025 at LOETB Administrative Offices, Portlaoise.

Present

Cllr Catherine Fitzgerald (Deputy Chairperson)	
Cllr Eddie Fitzpatrick	Seamus Bennett
Serena Fitzpatrick	Cllr Ollie Clooney
Cllr Hugh Egan	William Flanagan
Cllr Claire Murray (online)	Cllr John King
Gareth Stanley	Valerie O'Connell
Cllr Caroline Dwane Stanley	Cllr Tommy Mulligan
Cllr Claire Murray Smale (online)	Cllr Vivienne Phelan

In Attendance

Joe Cunningham, Chief Executive
Pam Nolan, Director of OSD
Emily McAuley, Head of Finance
Nicole Doyle, Corporate Services

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Deputy Chairperson, Catherine Fitzgerald, welcomed members and thanked them for their attendance.

Apologies were received from Neil Feighery, Tara Carty, Clive Davis, and Myra Kennedy.

2. Minutes of LOETB Board meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting, which took place on 25 February 2025, were circulated to members. Members approved the minutes.

Proposed: John King

Seconded: Seamus Bennett

Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

3. Governance

Critical System Oversight Committee Update

Pam Nolan provided an update on the Critical System Oversight Committee risk register regarding the addition of four new risks, one red and three yellow.

The members reviewed and noted the update provided.

Declaration of Interest

As per Schedule 3, Paragraph 10, Section 3 of the ETB Act (2013) and the Agenda Notice, no conflicts of interest were declared.

4. Reports from Committees of the Board

The reports from the last Audit and Risk Committee and Finance Committee on the 20 March 2025 were circulated to members for noting.

5. Minutes of Committees of the Board

The following minutes were circulated to members prior to the meeting for noting.

Audit and Risk Committee

- 11 July 2024
- 28 November 2024
- 25 February 2025

Finance Committee

- 28 November 2024
- 25 February 2025

Youth Work Committee

- 23 May 2024

Banagher College

- 20 November 2024

Coláiste Naomh Cormac

- 21 January 2025

Portlaoise College

- 16 September 2024
- 5 November 2024

St Fergal's College

- 26 February 2025
- 3 March 2025

6. Annual Reports from the Committees of the Board



Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee for 2024

The Audit and Risk Committee met four times in 2024 and the following matters were examined and reviewed:

1. Minutes of the Committee meetings held on 26 February 2024, 25 March 2024, 11 July 2024 and 28 November 2024.
2. Minutes of Finance Committee meetings held on 27 February 2024, 21 March 2024, 11 July 2024, and 28 November 2024.
3. Minutes of Board meetings held on 23 January 2024, 27 February 2024, 26 March 2024, 28 May 2024, 20 August 2024, 24 September 2024, 22 October 2024, 26 November 2024, and 10 December 2024.
4. The Terms of Reference for the Audit and Risk Committee were approved.
5. The Critical System Oversight Committee reports were reviewed and recommended to the Board for adoption.
6. The Annual Report 2023 was reviewed.
7. The Performance Delivery Agreement and Oversight Agreement 2024 were reviewed.
8. The following Internal Controls were examined:
 - Draft Statement of Internal Controls 2023
 - Letter of Assurance regarding internal control and audit arrangement for ESBS-ETB Payroll Shared Services
 - Statement from the Chief Executive for the financial period January to December 2023
 - Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control
9. Documentation following the C&AG Audit from 2022 was reviewed.
10. The following procedures were approved:
 - Procedure for Additional Accommodation in Post-Primary Schools
 - Board And Committee Member Exit Procedures
 - Confidentiality Protocols
 - Gift Procedures
 - Hospitality And Entertainment Procedure
 - Opening and Evaluation of Tenders Procedures
 - Physical and Environmental Security Procedures
 - Procedures and Guidance on the Hire Rental and Licence of Premises
 - Procedures and Guidance on the Lease of Premises
 - Procedure for Implementing a Wayleave

- Procedure for Purchasing and Payments
 - Procedure for Physical and Environmental Security
 - Procedure for LOETB Board Materials Post-Resignation or Retirement
 - Purchasing and Payment Procedures
 - Lease Application Procedure for FET
 - Procedure for using the Seal of LOETB
 - Protected Disclosures Procedure
11. The following internal audit reports were produced in 2024 and were reviewed by Audit and Risk Committee;
- A Procurement Capital and Asset Management Audit based on controls for the period 1 July 2021 to 31 December 2022. The audit fieldwork took place in LOETB in February and March 2023 and was carried out by IAU-ETB. The overall finding was that an Adequate system of Internal Control is in place.
 - A Learner and Apprentice Payroll Audit based on controls for the 15-month period from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2023. The overall finding was that an Adequate system of Internal Control is in place.
 - A sectoral report on ICT Follow-up Audits 2018 and 2019.
12. Mellissa McIntyre, Deputy Director of IAU-ETB met with the committee on 26 February 2024.
13. Magdalena Przybylo and Xia Ren, Comptroller and Audit General, met with the Committee on 26 February 2024.

Declan Kirrane

Signed: Declan Kirrane (Mar 21, 2025 13:08 GMT)

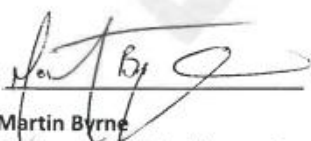
Declan Kirrane
Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee



Annual Report of the Finance Committee for 2024

The Finance Committee held meetings on 27 February 2024, 25 March 2024, 11 July 2024 and 28 November 2024 where the following matters were examined and reviewed:

1. Minutes of the Finance Committee meetings held on 27 February 2024, 25 March 2024, 11 July 2024 and 28 November 2024.
2. The Service Plan for 2024 was recommended to the Board for adoption.
3. The Terms of Reference for the Finance Committee were approved.
4. The Performance Delivery and Oversight Agreement for 2024 were reviewed.
5. The Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee for 2023 was agreed/
6. The Draft Statement on Internal Control and Letter of Representation was recommended to the Board for adoption.
7. The Board members reviewed the NTMA Investment.
8. The Annual Financial Statements 2023 were recommended to the Board for adoption.
9. SOLAS Funding for 2024 was reviewed.
10. The Letter of Determination from DoE in respect of year ending 31 December 2024 was reviewed.
11. The Bank Overdraft for 2024 was considered and recommended to the Board for adoption.
12. The monthly accounts and other financial reports for 2024 were examined.
13. All Building Works and Procurement in 2024 were reviewed.
14. Documentation following the C&AG Audit from 2022 was reviewed.

Signed: 
Martin Byrne
Chairperson of the Finance Committee

7. Annual Report 2024

A copy of the draft Annual Report for 2024 was circulated to members. Joe Cunningham took members through the Annual Report and explained that the Statement of Services section corresponds with the activities on our Service Plan 2024. The CE also explained that the Service Plan sets out our goals, priorities, actions, performance indicators and targets for the year and the Annual Report details the performance against the planned activity.

A member asked if this document was available to the public. The CE stated that the report will be published once the accounts are audited and approved and laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas for review.

Chairperson's Comprehensive Report to the Minister

Pam Nolan informed members that, as part of the Annual Report each year, the Chairperson's Comprehensive Report to the Minister must be submitted as set out in the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs. This report to the Minister is a confidential letter from the Chairperson of the Board to the Minister of Education. It sets out any new or significant financial developments that are exceptional in 2024.

Pam Nolan took members through the report, explaining the financial developments in detail and explained that the Statement of Internal Control is attached to the Chairperson's Comprehensive Report as an Appendix.

Members approved the report to the Minister, and the Deputy Chairperson and CE signed same.

Proposed: Caroline Dwane Stanley

Seconded: Hugh Egan

8. Nomination of Community Representative to Schools Board of Management

School	Nomination	Proposed	Seconded
St Fergal's College	Ciera Carroll	John King	Valerie O'Connell

9. Terms of Reference

The Youth Work Committee Terms of Reference were circulated to members prior to the meeting for review. The members approved the updates in the Terms of Reference in line with the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs.

Proposed: John King

Seconded: Caroline Dwane Stanley

10. Finance

Annual Financial Statements 2024

Members were informed that the Finance Committee reviewed the Working Papers and the Annual Financial Statements (AFS) for 2024 in detail at their meeting on 20 March 2025 and recommended the adoption of same by the Board. Emily McAuley took members through the AFS in detail. A discussion took place on the notes regarding the financial statements and members were satisfied with the accounts as presented. The Board approved the AFS for 2024.

Proposed: Caroline Dwane Stanley

Seconded: Hugh Egan

Statement on the System of Internal Control

Pam Nolan took members through the Statement on the System of Internal Control (SIC) emphasising the Key Control Procedures, Oversight Framework, Audit and Risk Committee, Finance Committee, Audit reports and breaches of the System of Internal Control. The total purchasing breaches amounted to €80,317.54 ex VAT. The total contract breaches amounted to €2,791,925 ex VAT.

The Audit and Risk and Finance Committee respectively reviewed the draft Statement on System of Internal Controls and recommended same for signature by the Chairperson of the Board.

Members approved the Statement on the System of Internal Control which was then signed by the Deputy Chairperson.

Proposed: Caroline Dwane Stanley

Seconded: Hugh Egan

Letter of Representation

Members reviewed LOETB's Letter of Representation to the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG). Pam Nolan explained to the members that the format for the letter is laid down by the C&AG and that the Audit and Risk Committee and Finance Committee had reviewed the Letter of Representation on the 20 March 2025 and found it to be accurate and true.

Members approved the Letter of Representation.

Proposed: Caroline Dwane Stanley

Seconded: Hugh Egan

Bank Overdraft

LOETB's overdraft facility, per sanction received from the Dept. Of Education, is due to expire in June 2025. The current overdraft facility is €5million and the proposal is to extend the facility for a further year.

The Finance Committee, at its meeting on 20 March, accepted the CE's proposal that the Board should extend the overdraft amount of €5 million for the purposes of carrying out the Board's functions and covering salaries.

Members approved this extension.

Proposed: Caroline Dwane Stanley

Seconded: Hugh Egan

11. Language Bursaries

The language bursary allocations for 2025 were discussed at the meeting with a total proposed expenditure of €40,000, the same amount as 2024. Members approved same.

Proposed: John King

Seconded: William Flanagan

12. Lease for Office Space in Portlaoise

Following a public call for office accommodation and associated parking for FET Management staff, a Lease at Grattan House (Portlaoise) was proposed. It was explained to members that approval by the Board would then require approval by the Property Oversight Group (Dept. of Education) before a lease could be progressed.

The building is 7125sq. ft. and the lease amount is €85,500 for four years and nine months.

Proposed: Valerie O'Connell

Seconded: Caroline Dwane Stanley

13. Correspondence

Item No.	Correspondence From	Date/Ref No.	Details	
1.	Dept. of Education	CL15.2025	Revision of Teacher Salaries under the Public Service Agreement 2024-2026	Noted by Members
2.	Dept. of Education	CL16.2025	Revision of Salaries for Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) under the Public Service Agreement 2024-2026	Noted by Members

3.	Dept. of Education	CL17.2025	Revision of Salaries and Allowances of Certain Grades other than Teachers and SNAs employed by ETBs under The Public Service Agreement 2024 - 2026	Noted by Members
4.	Dept. of Education	CL18.2025	Revision of salaries for Clerical Officers and Caretakers employed in National Schools under the 1978/79 Scheme and Clerical Officers employed in Post Primary Schools under the Public Service Agreement 2024 - 2026	Noted by Members
5.	Dept. of Education	CL19.2025	Revision of Salaries of School Secretaries and School Maintenance Staff in Community and Comprehensive Schools under the Public Service Agreement 2024 – 2026	Noted by Members
6.	Dept. of Education	CL20.2025	Revision of Salaries for School Secretaries Previously Funded Under Ancillary Grant Funding	Noted by Members
7.	Dept. of Education	CL21.2025	Prescribed Material for the Leaving Certificate English Examination in 2027	Noted by Members
8.	Dept. of Education	CL22.2025	Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma of Teacher Professional Learning for Teachers working with Students with Special Educational Needs - Autism	Noted by Members
9.	Dept. of Education	CL23.2025	Review of Enrolment in a Special Class	Noted by Members
10.	Dept. of Education	CL24.2025	Criteria for Enrolment in Special Classes for Children with Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) or Speech Sound Disorder (SSD)	Noted by Members

14. Appointment of Board Member

Appointment of 1 nominee by bodies specified by the Minister in accordance with Section 30(11) of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013

The Deputy Chairperson informed members that the Education and Training Boards Act 2013 Section 30(11) set out the bodies specified by the Minister:

1. Bodies representative of Business, Industry, and Employers;
2. Bodies representatives of Learners;
3. Bodies representatives of persons engaged in the management of, or leadership in, recognised schools;
4. Other Bodies.

The Deputy Chairperson explained to members that this nominee is due to replace Jim Cashen who resigned his position on the Board. The Deputy Chairperson referred to the list of nominations previously received by LOETB and circulated to members and asked for a nomination to the Board.

1. Bodies representative of Learners

Nominee: Michael Burke

Nominee: Annette Evans

2. Other Bodies

Nominee: Alan Lindley

Nominee: Lynda Scully

A discussion took place and members nominated Alan Lindley.

Nominee: Alan Lindley

Proposed: Caroline Dwane Stanley

Seconded: Serena Fitzpatrick

15. Vote of Sympathy

The Board extends its sympathy to the following staff members on their recent family bereavements:

- Laura Booth – Portarlinton FET Centre
- Sean Smith – Midland Skills Centre

16. Vote of Congratulation

The Board wishes to extend their congratulations on the following achievements:

- As part of the LOETB STEAM Programme, CNC Kilcormac recently won the LOETB First Lego League competition in Midlands Skills Tullamore. They now go on to represent LOETB in the First LEGO League national finals in Dublin on 12 April.
- Three LOETB schools qualified for the VEX Robotics national finals in Cork; Oaklands Community College, Tullamore College, and Dunamase College

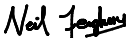
- Coláiste Naomh Cormac's traditional Irish music group came third in the national Wesley Interschool Music Competition.
- CNC Kilcormac Junior Hurlers were crowned Leinster Champions
- Oaklands Community College is celebrating a major triumph at the prestigious Best of Ireland Stage School Awards.
- A member asked for their congratulations to also be extended to the Laois Traveller Action Group on the publication of their new cooking and culture book.

17. Any Other Business

Pam Nolan informed members that Phase 3 of the Governance Training provided by ETBI will take place online on 8 April 2025 from 2pm to 4pm.

18. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on 27 May at Coláiste Naomh Cormac, Kilcormac, Offaly.

Signed: 
 Neil Feighery (Jun 6, 2025 09:39 GMT+1)

Date: 06/06/2025

Chairperson