

PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PUNJAB

Standing Committee on Education

Pre-Budget Public Consultation

**How to Ensure Effective Spending on Education:
Ideas for the Budget 2012-2013**

Wednesday, February 08, 2012
Lahore



Provincial Assembly of the Punjab Standing Committee on Education

The Standing Committee on Education, Provincial Assembly of the Punjab is elected by the provincial legislature to deal with, under the rules, to review and give recommendations on the legislation referred to the committee by the house. Under the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab 2011, the committee so far does not have any say in the budgetary allocations of the Provincial Education Department.

Introduction

Under the Rules of Business and Conduct of Business in the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab (Amended May 12, 2011), Standing Committees of the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab have no specific role in providing budget input or detailed budget scrutiny.

It is important to note, however, that the Punjab Assembly took the lead over other provincial legislatures of Pakistan when on October 13, 2010, the Assembly formally passed an amendment in the rules through which it fixed fixing at least four days for pre-budget debate in its sessions being held from January to March every year.

In developed Parliamentary democracies, Parliamentary Committees have a significant role in the budget process to not only review demands for grants for executive departments, but also collect and present public and expert proposals for budget priorities ahead of the annual budget.

Pre-Budget Public Consultation

In many countries of the world, Parliamentary Committees hold annual pre-budget consultations to solicit the views of experts, interest groups and the general public. This way, these committees contribute to the budget making process by holding pre-budget consultations prior to the preparation of the annual budget. These consultations are generally held on specific issues related to the province or on broad issues of national importance, the allocation of revenues and the sources of the revenues.

Experts or stakeholders are either invited to appear before the committees or public proposals are sought through wider public consultations. Experts and stakeholders, including citizens and interest groups., etc. appearing before the committee are invited to submit an advanced written brief of proposals to these committees.

Following the consultation the committees compile and present specific reports to their respective Assemblies. These reports include both specific and general recommendations that reflect the statements of the stakeholders and the other measures that the Committee members believe should be included in the forthcoming budget. While these recommendations help inform the budget preparations of the Departments / Ministry of Finance they are not guaranteed to be included in the budget.

Hearing and Witnesses

Experts or witnesses provide a good opportunity for members of a committee to hear the views of the public on any topic the committee might be studying. Most of the witnesses are either experts in a particular field (including departmental officials) or non-governmental organizations with particular interest in the matter before the committee or,

more rarely, private individuals. In addition to the brief submitted by a witness / expert in advance of the hearing / consultation to the Committee, these Witnesses or Experts give short statement outlining the main points they wish to make and this is followed by questions from the members. Any statement that a witness may make at the meeting is usually protected by the same privileges' as those enjoyed by the members.

For each issue under consideration, a Parliamentary Committee may decide how long it will spend hearing witnesses, how many witnesses it wishes to hear and which specific witnesses will appear before it. Should the committee's time be limited, or should the study be of particularly broad interest, the committee may also decide to request briefs from groups and individuals who may be unable to appear as witnesses.

Pre-Budget Public Consultation by the Standing Committee on Education, Provincial Assembly of the Punjab

In order to get expert proposals and views about the allocation of budgetary grants for Education in the upcoming Provincial Budget, the Punjab Assembly Standing Committee on Education is holding Pre-Budget Consultations.

The initiative, first of its kind by any Provincial Legislature of Pakistan, is being taken to bridge the gap between the people and the Provincial Legislature of Punjab and to establish the tradition of eliciting public input and ownership of Punjab's educational priorities by its elected representatives.

This Pre-Budget Consultation is open to the **Media**.

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Hotel Avari, Lahore

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