

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC ED 3 (12) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

EDUCATION MEETING

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH

17 OCTOBER 2012

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The fifteenth NSMC Education meeting was held at the NSMC Joint Secretariat Office in Armagh on 17 October 2012. The meeting was attended by Ciaran Cannon, TD, Minister of State with special responsibility for Training and Skills, John O'Dowd, MLA, Minister for Education, and Nelson McCausland, MLA, Minister for Social Development. Minister of State Cannon chaired the meeting.

EDUCATIONAL UNDERACHIEVEMENT

2. The Council received a detailed presentation on the work being done by the Educational Underachievement Working Group (EUWG) in the fields of Literacy and Numeracy. They noted that the EUWG met on 4 September 2012 to review and advance its work programme including a review of progress on the production of a joint report by the two inspectorates on best practice in literacy and numeracy in post-primary settings and the potential for a similar publication on good practice in supporting those with special educational needs.

3. Ministers also noted that both Departments are supporting Maths week in 2012 and that discussions between officials are taking place on the sharing of best practice on attendance and retention.
4. The Council welcomed the EUWG's consultation with Children's Books Ireland on the potential for a proposal encouraging young teenagers involvement in reading.

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

5. Ministers noted the content of a joint report from the two Teaching Councils on outstanding issues and obstacles to teacher mobility and the progress reported at the North South Teacher Qualifications Working Group (NSTQWG) on 12 October, 2012.
6. The Council also noted the ongoing discussions between Marino College of Education, Dublin, the University of Ulster (UU) and St Mary's University College, Belfast, concerning the possibility of delivering the Scrúdú Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge (the Irish language qualification) and relevant actions taken by the North South Teacher Qualifications Working Group to progress the matter.
7. Ministers noted that the decision by Departments to extend the jointly funded collaborative programme of work in the Irish-medium sector for the 2012/13 academic year.
8. The Council welcomed the ongoing exchanges between inspectorates from the two Departments and their sharing of good practice in school evaluation.

SCHOOL, YOUTH AND TEACHER EXCHANGES

9. The Council noted the successful 10th SCoTENS Annual Conference which took place in Cavan on 11-12 October 2012 on the theme of 'Creative Teachers for Creative Learners: Implications for Teacher Education', and the follow-up evaluation report on the first 8 years of SCoTENS.
10. Ministers noted ongoing work to implement the recommendations outlined in the joint inspectorate evaluation report of the Dissolving Boundaries project.
11. The Council welcomed the continuing joint support for the Causeway Programme and the North South Education and Training Standards Committee for Youth Work in Ireland.
12. Ministers noted that discussions are taking place between the Department of Education and Department of Education and Skills officials to progress with Part 2 of the study on North South cooperation in the education sector. They asked for a progress report at the next NSMC meeting.

EDUCATION SURVEY IN BORDER REGIONS

13. The Council noted the progress made towards the development of a questionnaire and mechanisms for a joint attitudinal survey to inform cross-border pupil movement and school planning. The survey will be issued in the last week of October by the Department of Education and in late November by the Department of Education and Skills.
14. Ministers re-affirmed that a final report on the results from the survey and proposals on the way forward will be available for consideration no later than their first NSMC Education meeting of 2013.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

15. Ministers agreed to continue to support the efforts of both administrations to ensure the agreed expansion of the Middletown Centre for Autism is delivered as soon as possible.
16. The Council welcomed the recently published report on the joint inspection of the Centre by the Department of Education and Skills Inspectorate and the Education and Training Inspectorate.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

17. The Council agreed to hold the next NSMC Education meeting in February 2013.

**Joint Secretariat
17 October 2012**