

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC ED 2 (12) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

EDUCATION MEETING

FARMLEIGH, DUBLIN

15 JUNE 2012

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The fourteenth NSMC Education meeting was held at Farmleigh on 15 June 2012. The meeting was attended by John O'Dowd, MLA, Minister for Education, Ruairí Quinn, TD, Minister for Education and Skills and Nelson McCausland, MLA, Minister for Social Development. Minister O'Dowd chaired the meeting.

EDUCATION SURVEY IN BORDER REGIONS

2. The Council noted progress made towards the development of a questionnaire and mechanisms for a joint attitudinal survey to inform cross-border pupil movement and school planning. They agreed the planned next steps for the conduct of the survey and also agreed that a final report on the results and proposals on the way forward will be available for consideration no later than the first NSMC Education meeting of 2013.

EDUCATIONAL UNDERACHIEVEMENT

3. Ministers noted that the Educational Underachievement Working Group (EUWG) had met in March 2012 to review and advance its work programme. The Working group has reviewed 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. Ministers welcomed the Working Group's planned consultation with Children's Books Ireland on the potential for a proposal encouraging young teenagers' involvement in reading.

4. The Council noted that both Departments are giving consideration to supporting Maths Week in 2012, and that discussions are taking place between officials on the sharing of best practice on attendance and retention.

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

5. The Council welcomed the ongoing liaison between the two Teaching Councils on issues relating to professional recognition and registration in both jurisdictions and noted that a meeting between the Councils was held on 14 June 2012 and that this focused on mobility, accreditation and recognition of qualifications of teachers in a cross-border context. Ministers noted that their objective is to facilitate full mobility of teachers across both jurisdictions.
6. Ministers noted the ongoing consideration being given by Marino College of Education, Dublin, to the University of Ulster's proposal to deliver a preparatory course to enable students to undertake assessments administered by Marino College leading to the Scrúdú Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge (the Irish language qualification) and the continuing interest shown by St Mary's University College, Belfast, in delivering the course.
7. On Irish Medium Education, Ministers noted the ongoing work of a jointly funded collaborative programme for the 2011/12 academic year to support 12 Gaeltacht schools and Irish medium schools, whose participation in the programme will be evaluated with a view to identifying teaching and learning impacts, and best practice examples for wider dissemination. Analysis of feedback from participating schools has taken place and plans to develop an action plan for 2012-2013 have been initiated.
8. The Council welcomed the active participation of Irish medium teachers from both systems in educational conferences. Twelve Irish medium teachers from the South took part in the Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta Conference in Coláiste Feirste, Belfast in March and six Irish medium teachers from the North took part at the Gaelscoileanna Conference in Tullamore in November 2011.
9. Ministers welcomed ongoing exchanges between the two inspectorates, including their sharing of good practice in school evaluation and their plans for further paired exchanges during the 2012-2013 academic year.

SCHOOL, YOUTH AND TEACHER EXCHANGES

10. Ministers welcomed the proposed 10th SCoTENS Annual Conference in Cavan in October 2012 entitled 'Creative Teachers for Creative Learners: Implications for Teacher Education'.

11. The Council welcomed the North South Student Exchanges that took place in March 2012 and ongoing work to implement the recommendations outlined in the joint inspectorate evaluation report of the Dissolving Boundaries project.
12. Ministers welcomed the continuing joint support for the Causeway Programme and the North South Education and Training Standards Committee for Youth Work in Ireland.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

13. The Council agreed to a limited expansion of services delivered by the Middletown Centre for Autism with a focus on ensuring a sustainable future for the Centre and supported joint efforts to ensure the agreed expansion is delivered as soon as possible.
14. Ministers noted the continued progress made by the Centre in delivering its Training and Advisory Service and Research and Information Service to children, professionals and parents.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15. The Council agreed to hold the next NSMC Education meeting on 17 October 2012.

**Joint Secretariat
15 June 2012**