



Northern Ireland
Assembly
Committee for Education
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 19 September 2012
SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present:

Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Michaela Boyle MLA
Jo-Anne Dobson MLA
Brenda Hale MLA
Chris Hazzard MLA
Trevor Lunn MLA
Michelle McIlveen MLA
Sean Rogers MLA
Pat Sheehan MLA

In Attendance:

Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)
Sheila Mawhinney (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Paula Best (Clerical Supervisor)
Sharon Young (Clerical Officer)

Apologies:

Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)

The meeting commenced in public session at 10.02 am.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

2. Chairperson's Business

- The Chairperson referred to an invitation to an event organised by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI).

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to ETI to request that its future events be scheduled so as to not coincide with the Committee's weekly meeting.

- The Chairperson referred to concerns raised by stakeholders at the Committee's event on school transport - health and safety issues, which was held on Tuesday 18 September 2012.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to send a note of the points discussed, to the Department to address during the joint DE/DoE briefing on 3 October 2012.

- The Chairperson expressed his thanks to Assembly Research for the tabled paper on the English Baccalaureate examination.

Agreed: Members agreed to request a more detailed research paper on the reform of GCSEs in England and the implications for Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed that, on foot of earlier correspondence on the implications of the GCSE reform process, the Committee would write again to the Minister and also write to the Education Committee at Westminster to seek further information on the scrutiny of the new proposals and inclusion in the consultation arrangements.

3. Draft Minutes of 12 September 2012

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2012 were agreed by the Committee.

4. Matters Arising

- The Committee discussed the format of the event on Area Planning / Viability Audits scheduled for 26 September 2012.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that attendees would be pre-divided into groups and that stakeholder rapporteurs would feedback responses from each group.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Members would suggest, before close of play on 19 September 2012, the names of further schools to be invited to the event.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to a request from Professor Colin Knox from the University of Ulster to attend the event.

5. The Education (Levels of Progression for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3) Order (Northern Ireland) 2012

The Committee considered an SL1 proposal from the Department to make the Statutory Rule, The Education (Levels of Progression for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3) Order (Northern Ireland) 2012.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer further consideration of this SL1 pending an oral briefing from the Department and CCEA on 3 October 2012.

6. Departmental briefing on Priorities for Youth

Departmental officials joined the meeting at 10.28am.

Miss Linda Wilson, Director of Families and Communities, Ms Julie Stephenson, Head of Youth and Schools in the Community Team, Mrs Cathie Galway, Head of Early Years 2 Team and Mr Oliver McKearney, Early Years 1 Team, briefed the Committee on the draft policy for the Youth Service, 'Priorities for Youth'.

Brenda Hale joined the meeting 10.33am.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Some Members expressed surprise at the timing of the mapping process for existing youth provision. It was also suggested that the mapping process should precede the implementation of the new Priorities for Youth policy.

Officials left the meeting at 11.11am.

Trevor Lunn left the meeting at 11.11am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department: seeking clarification on timing issues; reflecting the views of some Members that the mapping process should precede the implementation of the policy; and requesting a Departmental briefing on responses to the consultation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the consultation document to the Social Development, Justice and Environment Committees for information.

The Committee discussed a possible event on Youth Services at which feedback on the draft policy might be sought.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk should prepare a proposal for a Youth Services event.

Brenda Hale left the meeting 11.15am.

7. Correspondence

7.1. The Committee noted updates from the Department, the Western Education and Library Board and the Belfast Education and Library Board on the Achieving Derry/ Belfast programmes.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department expressing its concerns about the apparent lack of application of the lessons learned from these programmes.

7.2. The Committee considered correspondence from the Department relating to the administration of medication in schools. Committee Members indicated that urgent action on this issue was required.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to request that the Regional Strategy Group engage urgently with key stakeholders, including parents and trade unions with a view to a speedy resolution of this issue.

7.3. Members considered correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister outlining legislative

proposals to establish a single Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman, together with a copy of the response from the Minister to that Committee setting out his views of the proposals.

Agreed: Members agreed to reply to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, asking to be kept informed regarding these proposals, and expressing their concern that primary and post-primary education is apparently not to be included in the remit of the new Ombudsman.

- 7.4.** The Committee noted correspondence from Carrickfergus College requesting an opportunity to meet the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the College congratulating its students on its recent examination results and inviting pupils to visit Parliament Buildings and meet the Deputy Chairperson.

- 7.5.** The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister on the Executive's European Priorities 2012-2013 Implementation Plan.

- 7.6.** The Committee noted the Equality Screening Outcome Report for the Education and Library Boards and the Staff Commission for the period 1 April 2012 to 30 June 2012.

- 7.7.** The Committee also noted a Summary of the Education and Library Board's and the Staff Commission's Equality Action Plan for the period 1 January to 31 March 2012.

- 7.8.** The Committee considered correspondence from parents concerned about the Special Educational Needs support being afforded to their child by the Western Education and Library Board.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department regarding issues of policy raised by the correspondence.

- 7.9.** The Committee noted an invitation from the Pawzitive organisation to an information morning on Post Primary Literacy.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the organisation, commending it on its work but, owing to the demands of the Committee's work programme, declining the invitation.

- 7.10.** Members noted correspondence from the Department indicating that it plans to launch a consultation on the draft 'Traveller Child in Education – Action Framework'.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request a briefing at the end of the consultation.

7.11. The Committee considered correspondence from the Belong organisation relating to the draft 'Traveller Child in Education – Action Framework'.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to advise this organisation that the Committee had agreed to seek a Departmental briefing at the end of the relevant consultation.

7.12. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Employment and Learning requesting further information from the Department of Education on the launch event of 'Preparing for Success'.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the relevant request to the Department.

7.13. Members considered correspondence from the Committee for Employment and Learning on the Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Review.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking an update on its reported proposals to extend a young person's statement to further and higher education to age 24.

7.14. The Committee noted an update from the Committee for the Environment on spot checks on school buses.

7.15. Members noted correspondence from the Committee for the Environment, enclosing a response from the Minister of the Environment on the community use of schools.

7.16. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department providing data on GCSE English and Mathematics results.

7.17. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department raising awareness of the advertising campaign, 'Get Involved Because Education Works'.

7.18. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Employment and Learning requesting the attendance of officials from the Department of Education to brief on its inquiry into Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: Members agreed that they were content for Departmental officials to brief the Committee for Employment and Learning in this regard.

The Committee also noted a number of Department of Education News Releases which were previously emailed to Members.

8. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme from September to December 2012.

9. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

10. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 26 September 2012 at 10.00am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11.27 am.

Mervyn Storey
Chairperson, Committee for Education
26 September 2012