



Northern Ireland  
Assembly  
Committee for Education  
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2012  
THE SENATE CHAMBER

**Present:**

Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)  
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig 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)  
Kerry Richards (Clerical Officer)  
Ursula Savage (Bursary Student)  
Caroline Perry (Research Officer) – *Item 6 only*

**Apologies:**

Michaela Boyle MLA

*The meeting commenced in public session at 10.02am.*

**1. Apologies**

Apologies are detailed above.

**2. Chairperson's Business**

- 2.1. The Chairperson advised Members that, together with the Deputy Chairperson, he had attended an informal lunch and presentation seminar with Ms Heather Smith, President of US organisation "Rock the Vote", which has undertaken successful programmes to improve young people's participation in democracy.

- 2.2.** The Chairperson referred Members to a statement on 12 November 2012 from the Minister for Finance and Personnel in which reference was made to the funding of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and confirmation of an increased resource allocation to the Department of Education of £15m in 2013-2014 and £75m in 2014-2015.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking an update on the consultation on changes to EMA. The Committee also agreed to request further information on the budget reallocations.

- 2.3.** The Chairperson referred to the Departmental Corporate Plan 2012-2015 and Business Plan 2012-2013.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking an update and briefing on issues in the Plan including:

- the revision of the Formal Intervention Process;
- the production of the STEM action plan;
- Personal Education Plans for all looked-after children;
- the updated Use of Digital Technologies strategy;
- new arrangements for the recruitment and training of Boards of Governors;
- proposed regulations covering the removal of school governors;
- the regional strategy for managing teacher attendance and new procedures to support under-performing teachers and principals; and
- the Department's Business Improvement Programme.

### **3. Draft Minutes of 7 November 2012**

**Agreed:** The draft minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2012 were agreed by the Committee.

### **4. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from last week's meeting.

### **5. Committee Stage of the Education Bill – motion to extend**

The Committee discussed a motion to extend the Committee Stage of the Education Bill. The Committee also discussed how best to manage any additional time required for scrutiny of the Bill.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to put a motion before the Assembly to extend the Committee Stage of the Education Bill until 8 April 2013.

*Jonathan Craig joined the meeting at 10.15am.*

*Jo-Anne Dobson joined the meeting at 10.15am.*

*Brenda Hale joined the meeting at 10.18am.*

## **6. Briefing from RalSe on Studies into Underachievement.**

*The briefing commenced at 10.24am.*

Ms Caroline Perry, Assembly Research Officer, briefed the Committee on the level of underachievement in Northern Ireland; contributory factors; and approaches to addressing this issue.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*The briefing ended at 10.44am.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request further research on: the use of Acorn data in place of Free School Meal Entitlement as measure of deprivation; underachievement case studies and the sharing of best practice; and further information on the use of the pupil premium as part of the funding scheme for schools.

## **7. Departmental Briefing on Consultation Responses to Draft Regulations on the Publication of School and Pupil Performance information.**

*Departmental officials joined the meeting at 10.45am*

Mr David Hughes, Director of Curriculum, Qualifications and Standards; Mr Dale Heaney, Head of Assessment and Qualifications Team; Mr Carl Savage, Assessment and Qualifications Team; and Dr Chris Hughes, Head of Standards and Improvement, briefed the Committee on the responses received to the consultation on draft regulations which will change the targets and information published by schools in respect of attainment.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*Pat Sheehan left the meeting at 11.12am.*

*Chris Hazzard left the meeting at 11.43am.*

*Departmental officials left the meeting at 11.43am.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek further information on attainment – in particular a comparison of attainment by schools in respect of 5 A\*-C GCSEs and 7 A\*-C GCSEs and also in respect of gender or other relevant descriptors.

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed to write to the Department for a breakdown by sector of the consultation responses and to seek clarity as to whether the draft regulations will require schools to have a website.

## **8. Departmental Briefing on a Research Study into Attendance**

*Pat Sheehan rejoined the meeting at 11.46am.*

*Chris Hazzard rejoined the meeting at 11.46am.*

*Departmental officials joined the meeting at 11.46am.*

Mrs Caroline Gillan, Director of Access, Inclusion and Well-Being; Mrs Judith Finlay, Additional Education Needs Team; and Ms Pamela Woods, Chief Educational Welfare Officer, Belfast Education and Library Board, briefed the Committee on a Research Report prepared for the Department by RSM McClure Watters on Improving Attendance in Schools Serving Deprived Areas.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department for a further breakdown of attendance statistics by: gender, religion, rurality, Education and Library Board area and other relevant descriptors. The Committee also sought details of the levels of improvement in attendance achieved by schools in the study or where an attendance policy is in place.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward relevant research produced by Barnardo's to the Department for comment.

*Departmental officials left the meeting at 12.43pm.*

## **9. Correspondence**

**9.1.** The Committee noted an invitation from the NASUWT union to its annual conference in Bournemouth.

**9.2.** Members noted correspondence from the Department regarding the employment of non-UK/Rol nationals in home to school transport.

**9.3.** Members considered correspondence from the Rainbow Project on inequalities in education.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department for comment on recommendations put forward by the Rainbow Project and Cara-Friend.

**9.4.** The Committee considered correspondence from the Department on the School Workforce Review.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to postpone the scheduled briefing on the School Workforce Review.

**9.5.** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department providing a copy of the ETI Specialist Schools report and further information on District Inspection areas.

- 9.6. Members noted correspondence from the Committee for Regional Development on its inquiry into the Better Use of Public and Community Sector Funds for the Delivery of Bus Transport Options.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department and to the five Education and Library Boards as requested.

- 9.7. The Committee noted correspondence enclosing two public petitions received by the Speaker: one in respect of the continuation of Artillery Youth Centre; and the second in support of a new school build at Parkhall Integrated College.

- 9.8. **and Tabled** Members considered correspondence from the principal of Braniel Primary School regarding Computer-Based Assessment, together with correspondence from the Minister, also on this issue.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to visit Braniel Primary School on 20 November 2012 to see at first-hand the implementation of Computer-Based Assessment.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Minister for clarification of the legislative basis for Computer-Based Assessment, and for further information on the time-scale for compliance and the possibility of deferral of the completion of assessments by schools.

*Trevor Lunn left the meeting at 12.52pm.*

*Brenda Hale left the meeting at 12.53pm.*

*Jo-Anne Dobson left the meeting at 12.53pm.*

- 9.9. Members considered correspondence relating to the Department's policy in respect of the recognition of qualifications as equivalent to City and Guilds 6131.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Department for comment on the policy issue.

- 9.10. Members noted correspondence from the Department to the Committee for Employment and Learning in response to its request for information for its inquiry into Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance.

- 9.11. The Committee noted correspondence from Sir Robert Salisbury, Chairperson of the Independent Panel for the Review of the Common Funding Scheme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing to discuss the Common Funding Scheme Review Report when it is available.

- 9.12. Members noted correspondence from the Committee for the Environment on school transport issues in the Western Education and Library Board area.

- 9.13.** The Committee noted an invitation to a conference on EU Funding in Northern Ireland to be held in Belfast on 16 November 2012.
- 9.14.** Members noted correspondence from the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in response to Committee correspondence relating to the promotion of good mental health in the Revised Curriculum.
- 9.15.** The Committee considered correspondence from Fóram na nÓg, requesting an invitation to the Priorities for Youth informal stakeholder briefing on 28 November 2012. The Committee also noted a list of stakeholders who have already agreed to attend the event.
- Agreed:** The Committee agreed to extend an invitation to Fóram na nÓg.
- Agreed:** The Committee agreed a rapporteur format for the Priorities for Youth event.

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

## **10. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee discussed its draft Forward Work Programme and options for longer or additional Committee meetings during the Committee Stage of the Education Bill.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the amended Forward Work Programme.

## **11. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

## **12. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 21 November 2012 at 10.00am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.06pm.*

Mervyn Storey  
Chairperson, Committee for Education  
21 November 2012