



Northern Ireland
Assembly
Committee for Education
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2012
THE SENATE CHAMBER

Present:

Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Michaela Boyle MLA
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)
Kerry Richards (Clerical Officer)
Ursula Savage (Bursary Student)

Apologies:

None

The meeting commenced in public session at 10.03am.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Chairperson's Business

- 2.1.** The Chairperson expressed his thanks to the principal of Braniel Primary School who had facilitated the Committee's visit on 20 November 2012 to review Computer-Based Assessment. The Chairperson indicated that the visit had been extremely useful and timely, and had provided the Committee with a valuable insight into NILAs and NINAs.

Jonathan Craig joined the meeting at 10.04am.

Jo-Anne Dobson joined the meeting at 10.04am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that a copy of the information supplied by Braniel Primary School, *Effective use of performance data to track and monitor pupils' progress and address underachievement*, should be circulated to all Members of the Committee. The Committee also agreed to forward a copy to the Minister, seeking his comments on Braniel Primary School's successful tracking of pupil progress without the use of NILAs and NINAs.

Brenda Hale joined the meeting at 10.05am.

- 2.2. The Chairperson referred to a recent conference of the Primary Schools' Governors' Association.
- 2.3. The Chairperson noted a recent meeting involving a Member of the Committee and a Head Teachers' Association in Lagan Valley.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider scheduling a briefing from this organisation.

3. Draft Minutes of 14 November 2012

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2012 were agreed by the Committee.

4. Matters Arising

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

5. Departmental briefing on Computer- Based Assessment: NILAs / NINAs

Departmental officials joined the meeting at 10.13am.

David Hughes, Director of Curriculum, Qualifications and Standards; Dale Heaney, Head of Assessment and Qualifications Team; and Richard Hanna, interim Chief Executive, CCEA, briefed the Committee on the current completion level for the Computer-Based Northern Ireland Literacy and Numeracy Assessments.

The Chairperson noted the absence of a Departmental briefing paper on this issue.

Michaela Boyle joined the meeting at 10.18am.

Jo-Anne Dobson left the meeting at 11.19am.

Brenda Hale left the meeting at 11.36am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department:

- suggesting that 2012-13 be treated as pilot or dry run year and that the requirement for completion of Computer-Based testing, as specified in the relevant legislation, should not be enforced;
- requesting that the Department provide additional IT assistance and clarify the circumstances under which substitute teacher cover could

be provided for schools which are struggling to complete NILAs and NINAs;

- to determine if the Education and Training Inspectorate makes use of NfER testing results in the normal course of school inspections; and
- to determine whether the Department, given the evidence accumulated by the Committee, would be prepared to accept NfER testing in place of NINAs and NILAs.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to write to the Education and Library Boards, to determine if the Educational Psychology service makes use of NfER testing results in the assessment of children's educational needs.

Pat Sheehan joined the meeting at 11.46am.

Brenda Hale rejoined the meeting at 11.46am.

6. Departmental briefing on the Education Bill

The briefing commenced at 11.46am.

Mr Chris Stewart, Director of Equality and All-Ireland Division, briefed the Committee on the Education Bill.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Jonathan Craig left the meeting at 11.55am.

Michaela Boyle left the meeting at 12.28pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department for clarification in respect of admissions criteria for Catholic Maintained schools.

Trevor Lunn left the meeting at 12.36pm.

The briefing ended at 12.40pm.

7. Briefing from Assembly Legal Service on the Education Bill

The Committee agreed to defer the briefing from Assembly Legal Services on the Education Bill.

The Chairperson reminded Members that the written legal advice should be treated as confidential and should not be disclosed outside the Committee.

Jo-Anne Dobson rejoined the meeting at 12.42pm.

8. Clerk's Briefing on Subordinate Legislation

The Committee agreed to defer the Clerk's briefing on subordinate legislation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note advice provided by the Examiner of Statutory Rules on the Education Bill.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to schedule a briefing from the Assembly Bill Office on the legislative process for primary legislation.

9. Written Departmental briefing on the C2k contract

The Committee considered a written briefing from the Department providing an update on the revised IT services supplied under the C2k contract.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Belfast Education and Library Board for further information on broadband upgrades which have been delayed because of outstanding wayleave approvals.

10. Correspondence

10.1. The Committee considered a response from the Department to the Committee for Health, Social Services and Public Safety on programmes to tackle early years inequality.

10.2. **10.3, 10.4** and tabled item. Members considered various items of correspondence from the Departments of Education and Regional Development on a range of issues relating to school transport and the related PEDU Action Plans.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to reconsider this correspondence when the relevant PEDU Action Plans are available.

10.5. Members considered correspondence from parents concerned at the proposed closure of Woodlands Language Unit.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department for comment.

10.6. The Committee noted correspondence from the Southern Education and Library Board on Area Planning.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider this correspondence again at its meeting on 9 January 2013 when a Departmental briefing on Area Planning has been scheduled.

10.7. The Committee noted a Newsletter provided by the Controlled Schools' Sectoral Support Body Working Group, and agreed to consider this when the Working Group briefs Members on 5 December 2012.

- 10.8.** Members noted an invitation from the African and Caribbean Support Organisation of Northern Ireland (ACSONI) to its Community Planning Day on 24 November 2012.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the organisation for further information on the sector it represents.

- 10.9.** Members noted correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, enclosing a progress report for the six months to 30 September 2012 on the Investment Strategy (ISNI).

- 10.10.** Members noted an invitation from the Shared Education Learning Forum to its conference on 13 December 2012.

- 10.11.** Members noted correspondence from the Committee for Regional Development, requesting officials from the Department of Education to give evidence to its Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Department for response.

- 10.12.** The Committee considered correspondence from the Department on its consultation on proposed increases to contributions for members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing on responses after the end of the consultation period. The Committee also agreed to write to the NITC seeking its views on the consultation.

- 10.13.** Members noted correspondence including some tabled items from the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, enclosing information on the Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI).

Agreed: The Committee agreed to refer this correspondence to the Minister for comment.

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

11. Forward Work Programme

The Committee discussed its draft Forward Work Programme and forthcoming evidence sessions for the Education Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the earlier starting time of 9.00am including a working lunch for its next three meetings. The Committee agreed to meet in Room 21 for its meetings on 28 November and 5 December 2012. The Committee also agreed that all written stakeholder evidence for the Committee Stage received to-

date should be made available to the Department and published on the Assembly website.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it does not require a further oral briefing on the SL1 for the proposed Statutory Rule, The Education (Levels of Progression for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3) Order.

Agreed: The Committee considered a list of sporting organisations prepared by Assembly Research. Members agreed that a shorter list restricted to those sports which include significant physical activity or team elements should be considered following a scheduled written briefing by the Department on Sport in School on 12 December 2012. It was further agreed, that at this time the Committee would discuss a stakeholder event to be arranged in the New Year.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the amended Forward Work programme.

12. Any Other Business

The Committee discussed information circulated by a Committee Member which referred to the Education Bill.

It was noted that press releases or other publications from Committee Members should clearly identify whether they relate to Committee business or if they are party political in nature.

13. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 28 November 2012 at 9.00am in Room 21, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.59pm.

Mervyn Storey
Chairperson, Committee for Education
28 November 2012