



Northern Ireland  
Assembly  
Committee for Education  
**DRAFT MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**  
WEDNESDAY 12 December 2012  
Room 144

**Present:**

Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)  
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Michaela Boyle MLA  
Jo-Anne Dobson MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Michelle McIlveen MLA  
Sean Rogers MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**In Attendance:**

Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Sharon Young (Clerical Officer)  
Kerry Richards (Clerical Officer)  
Ursula Savage (Bursary Student)

**Apologies:**

Jonathan Craig MLA  
Brenda Hale MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA

*The meeting commenced in open session at 9.32am.*

**1. Apologies**

Apologies are detailed above.

**2. Chairperson's Business**

- 2.1.** The Chairperson informed Members that a summary of issues raised at the Committee's Priorities for Youth Event had been sent to stakeholders for comment.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education asking for details of consultation with other departments in the development of the draft Priorities for Youth policy.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Education and Library Boards seeking their comments on the draft policy.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to commission Assembly Research to review the use of community or other audits of youth services in Northern Ireland.

*Pat Sheehan joined the meeting at 9.34am.*

- 2.2.** The Chairperson informed the Committee that he and the Deputy Chairperson received a briefing from the Department of Education on the Trends in International Maths and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) that were published on 11 December 2012.

The Committee congratulated primary school children and their teachers on their excellent performance as recorded by these international benchmark studies.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed a press release welcoming the findings of the TIMSS and PIRLS studies.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to receive a briefing from the Department on the TIMSS and PIRLS studies when more detailed information becomes available.

- 2.3.** The Committee noted an Assembly Research paper on the use of seatbelts for home to school transport.
- 2.4.** The Deputy Chairperson raised concerns relating to Post-19 Special Educational Needs provision.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education; the Department for Employment and Learning; and the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety asking that they set out their current policy for Post-19 SEN Provision.

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed to write to the Department of Education and the Department of Employment and Learning for information on their 14-19 Education Strategy.

### **3. Draft Minutes of 5 December 2012**

**Agreed:** The draft minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2012 were agreed by the Committee.

### **4. Matters Arising**

There were a number of matters arising from last week's meeting.

- 4.1** The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education providing additional detail on the admissions criteria applied by Catholic Maintained Schools.

- 4.2** The Committee noted an additional paper from the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education enclosing their proposed amendments to the Education Bill.
- 4.3** The Committee considered an Assembly Research paper entitled 'Education Bill: school inspection'.
- 4.4** The Committee noted a submission from the Western Education and Library Board to the Committee Stage of the Education Bill.
- 4.5** The Committee noted an additional submission from the Integrated Education Fund to the Committee Stage of the Education Bill.
- 4.6** The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education in respect of the Committee Stage of the Education Bill.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to seek legal advice in respect of Mr Justice Treacy's ruling relating to Colaiste Feirste and the Department.

## **5. SL1: The Education (Levels of Progression for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3) Order (NI) 2012**

*The briefing commenced at 9.46am.*

David Hughes, Director of Curriculum, Qualifications and Standards, DE; Dale Heaney, Head of Assessment and Qualifications Team, DE; and Ruth Kennedy, CCEA briefed the Committee on the above proposed statutory rule.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department indicating that it was content for the proposed rule to be made.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it welcomes assurances from the Department and CCEA that they would:

- engage with schools with a view to addressing the concerns set out in the Shadow Year Evaluation Report;
- enhance its support for schools in the development of tasks and to improve the task approval process;
- issue specific and detailed guidance as to how tasks are to be delivered so as to ensure consistency of approach among schools; and
- in-line with Ministerial guidance, work towards reducing moderation timescales so that in future the timetable for assessments would allow for assessments to be carried out in the summer term.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to arrange a visit to CCEA to gain a better insight into the responsibilities and operation of this organisation.

*The briefing ended at 9.57am.*

*Jo-Anne Dobson joined the meeting at 9.57am.*

## **6. Written Briefing from the Department of Education on Sport in Schools.**

The Committee noted a written briefing from the Department of Education regarding Sport in Schools.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee which included a letter from the Northern Ireland Schools Football Association.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Minister for Education on behalf of the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to invite the Northern Ireland Schools Football Association; Disability NI; and Tennis Ireland to join an informal briefing event on Sport in Schools in March.

**Agreed:** The Committee confirmed the other invitees, timing and format for the Sport in Schools informal briefing event.

## **7. Briefing from the Working Group for the Controlled Schools Sectoral Support Body.**

*The briefing commenced at 10.00am.*

Representatives of the Working Group: Mr Uel McCrea, Chairperson; the Reverend Ian Ellis; Reverend Trevor Gribben; Mrs Valerie Campbell; Mr Stephen Black; and Mr David Canning briefed the Committee on the establishment of a Controlled Schools Sectoral Support Body.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*Mervyn Storey declared an interest as a member of the Board of Governors of a controlled school at 10.24am.*

*Jo-Anne Dobson left the meeting at 11.11am.*

*Michelle McIlveen declared an interest as a member of the Board of Governors of 2 controlled primary schools at 11.14am.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to seek further updates on the progress of the Working Group.

*The briefing ended at 11.21am.*

## **8. Briefing from NICCE and CCMS on the Committee Stage of the Education Bill**

*The briefing commenced at 11.26am.*

Bishop Donal McKeown, Chairperson Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education (NICCE); Father Tim Bartlett, NICCE and Sister Eithne Woulfe NICCE and Mr Jim Clarke, Chief Executive Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) and Mr Gerry Lundy, Deputy Chief Executive CCMS attended the Committee meeting.

**Agreed:** Owing to time pressures, the Committee agreed to discontinue the briefing and invite NICCE and CCMS to a subsequent meeting.

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed that it was content for NICCE and CCMS to make joint or separate oral submissions to the Committee Stage of the Education Bill.

*The briefing ended at 11.33am.*

*Pat Sheehan left the meeting at 11.33am.*

*The Committee agreed to take the following agenda item.*

## **9. Correspondence**

- 9.1.** The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education regarding the Comptroller and Auditor General's NI General Report 2012.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking an update on the Pay Remit Team.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to reconsider Departmental or ALB non-compliance issues following publication of the C&AG's 2013 General Report.

- 9.2.** The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister for Education relating to the new Framework for Education and Learning in the Early Years.

- 9.3.** The Committee noted correspondence from the Lisburn Association of Primary and Nursery Principals regarding concerns with computer based assessments and other issues.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to arrange a visit by a delegation of Members in the New Year to meet with the Lisburn Association of Primary and Nursery Principals.

*Pat Sheehan re-joined the meeting at 11.40am.*

*Michaela Boyle left the meeting at 11.40am.*

- 9.4.** The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Health, Social Services and Public safety enclosing correspondence from Allergy NI highlighting issues affecting severely allergic school children.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence and write to the Department seeking commentary on its guidance to schools in respect of allergy issues.

- 9.5.** The Committee noted correspondence from a concerned parent regarding shared SEN provision.

- 9.6.** The Committee noted an invitation from the Northern Ireland Children's University to attend a briefing event.

**9.7.** The Committee noted correspondence from the North Eastern Education and Library Board and the Belfast Education and Library Board regarding the Educational Psychology Service's use of NfER assessment information.

**9.8.** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education informing the Committee of the Minister's joint decision with the Minister for Employment and Learning to cease the publication of the statistical release '16 and 17 Year Old Participation in Full-Time Education and Vocational Training'.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Minister and ask that in the future the Department brief the Committee verbally or in writing on responses to all consultations prior to final decisions being made.

**9.9.** The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education regarding difficulties associated with the City and Guilds 6131 Certificate for Workshop competence.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking an update from DE when further alternative training options are agreed upon.

**9.10.** The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister and the Department of Education on the NILA/NINA Computer Based Assessments.

**9.11.** The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education regarding the proposed re-location of the Woodland Speech and Language Unit.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department asking for an update on the Development Proposal when it is available.

**9.12.** The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education regarding viability audits and the area planning process.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request that it be provided with the new timetable for: the completion of post-primary Area Plans and the consultation for primary Area Plans.

**9.13.** The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education to the Committee for Regional Development's Inquiry into the better use of public and community sector funds for the delivery of bus transport options.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward this to the Committee for Regional Development.

**9.14.** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education regarding progress associated with the Savings Delivery Plan.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking a briefing on DE's progress in respect of the Savings Delivery Plan.

*Trevor Lunn left the meeting at 11.45am.*

*Michaela Boyle re-joined the meeting at 11.46am.*

- 9.15.** The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education regarding inequalities in education.

- 9.16.** The Committee noted correspondence from Kilbride Central Primary School on funding issues. The Committee discussed funding issues and reported changes to the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) in the Common Funding Formula.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to determine whether there had been a decrease in the AWPU as applied to primary and post-primary schools.

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed to forward the correspondence to the Independent Review of the Common Funding Scheme, for its consideration.

- 9.17.** The Committee noted a response from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the Delivering Social Change Signature Projects.

- 9.18.** The Committee noted correspondence from St Mary's Limavady enclosing the Shared Education Roe Valley Newsletter.

- 9.19.** The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Education to the Chairperson of the Committee for OFMDFM regarding the role of the Ombudsman.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Committee for OFMDFM.

- 9.20.** The Committee noted correspondence from the Belfast Education and Library Board regarding the C2K contract and wayleaves.

- 9.21.** The Committee noted correspondence from a concerned parent regarding caps on classroom sizes.

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

- 9.22.** The Committee noted an invitation from the Sharing Education Programme to attend their Learning Forum Conference 2012.

- 9.23.** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education regarding the January Monitoring Round.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forgo an oral briefing on the January Monitoring Round.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking clarification as to why no bids for additional resource or capital funding were made in the January Monitoring Round given the substantial reported backlog in respect of school building maintenance.

- 9.24.** The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education regarding the Entitlement Framework.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Committee for Employment and Learning.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask where the relevant ear-marked funds were to be re-allocated.

- 9.25.** The Committee noted a research proposal to evaluate computer based assessments by Stranmillis University College.

**Agreed:** The Committee to forward this proposal to the Department asking whether it is planned to fund this research.

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

*The meeting was suspended at 11.58am.*

*The meeting resumed in public session at 12.19pm.*

*Jo-Anne Dobson re-joined the meeting at 12.19pm.*

*Trevor Lunn re-joined the meeting at 12.19pm.*

## **10. Briefing from the GBA on the Committee Stage of the Education Bill**

*The briefing commenced at 12.19pm.*

The following representatives from the Governing Bodies Association (GBA); Mary-Lou Winchbourne, Director GBA; Brett Lockhart, GBA; Stephen Gowdy, GBA; and Carol McCann, GBA presented the GBA's submission to the call for evidence for the Committee Stage of the Education Bill.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department asking that it be provided with an updated ESA Business Plan.

*Michaela Boyle left the meeting at 1.02pm.*

*Danny Kinahan left the meeting at 1.12pm.*

*Trevor Lunn left the meeting at 1.15pm.*

*The briefing ended at 1.34pm.*



## **11. Response from the Department of Education on the Education Bill**

**Agreed:** Owing to time constraints, the Committee agreed to defer this briefing.

## **12. Forward Work Programme**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to the list of invitees, timing and format for the Early Years event to be held on 16 January 2012.

The Committee noted an Education Bill stakeholder event on 23 January 2013 and a Sport in Schools event on 6 March 2013.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to schedule an event in the Long Gallery on 20 March regarding the Department's GCE A-Level consultation.

## **13. AOB**

The Chairperson thanked the Committee staff for their work throughout the year and wished everyone a Happy Christmas.

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

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 9 January 2013 at 10.00am in Room 21, Parliament Buildings.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.36pm.*

Mervyn Storey  
Chairperson, Committee for Education  
9 January 2013