



Northern Ireland  
Assembly  
Committee for Education  
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 30 January 2013  
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:**

Stella McArdle (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Sharon Young (Clerical Supervisor)  
Kerry Richards (Clerical Officer)  
Tara Caul (Legal Services) - *item 5 only*

**Apologies:**

Michaela Boyle MLA

*The meeting commenced in closed session at 9.33am.*

*Michelle McIlveen joined the meeting at 9.34am.*

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were as indicated above.

**2. Chairperson's Business**

- 2.1. The Chairperson sent his best wishes on behalf of the Committee to the Clerk who is currently ill.
- 2.2. The Chairperson reminded Members about the Committee's Education Bill stakeholder event taking place that evening in the Long Gallery at 6.00pm.

*Brenda Hale joined the meeting at 9.34am.*

- 2.3.** The Chairperson discussed correspondence from a concerned parent to the Minister regarding Randalstown Central Primary School and the threatened closure of its reception class.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department asking to be copied in on the Minister's response to the concerned parent.

- 2.4.** The Chairperson discussed the Committee's forthcoming Sport in Schools Event.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to invite the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure to attend the event.

### **3. Draft Minutes of 23 January 2013**

**Agreed:** The draft minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2013 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 correspondence from Hazelwood, North Coast, Ulidia, Crumlin, Dungannon College, Maine, Bridge, Ballycastle, Forthill, Glengormley, New-Bridge, Rowandale, Sperrin, Blackwater and Oakgrove Integrated schools and APTIS regarding the Education Bill.

- 4.2.** The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for OFMDFM requesting a briefing from the Department of Education on relevant clauses of the Education Bill.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward the request to the Department of Education.

- 4.3.** The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for OFMDFM to OFMDFM requesting a briefing on the Education Bill and indicating that OFMDFM should correspond directly with the Committee for Education regarding the Education Bill.

- 4.4.** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education regarding TUPE arrangements for teachers.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write again requesting early sight of all Departmental amendments to the Education Bill.

### **5. Briefing from Assembly Legal Services – Justice Treacy's judgement regarding DE and Colaiste Feirste**

*The briefing commenced at 9.42am.*

The Committee considered legal advice.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to seek further legal advice on related issues.

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed to write to the Department seeking:

- its views on its commitments to Irish Medium Education;
- how its views on its commitments to Irish Medium Education have changed following the Colaiste Feirste judgement;
- the actions the Department has taken since the judgement; and
- the legal costs associated with the case.

The Committee noted that it had previously obtained a breakdown of all of the education legislation which is to be changed by the Education Bill.

*Brenda Hale left the meeting at 10.26am.*

*The briefing ended at 10.28am.*

*The meeting moved into open session at 10.29am.*

## **6. Briefing from the Independent Review Panel on the Review of the Common Funding Scheme.**

*The briefing commenced at 10.30am.*

*Michelle McIlveen left the meeting at 11.00am.*

Sir Robert Salisbury, Chairperson of the Independent Review Panel, Dr Eemer Eivers, Panel Member, and Mr Evan Bates, Panel Member, presented their findings to the Committee on the Review of the Common Funding Scheme

*Jo-Anne Dobson left the meeting at 11.58am.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking the following:

- further detail on the impact on individual schools of the proposed changes to the Common Funding Scheme;
- further detail on the additional support that might be provided to small schools;
- clarification as to whether the Department is planning to bring forward legislation to add Assembly control to any significant changes to the Common Funding Scheme; and
- timescales for the proposed changes to the Common Funding Scheme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to consider an informal briefing event with schools and school leaders so as to inform a possible Committee response to the Minister in respect of the Independent Panel's Review of the Common Funding Scheme.

*The briefing ended at 12.06pm.*

*Pat Sheehan left the meeting at 12.10pm.*

*Jo-Anne Dobson re-joined the meeting at 12.13pm.*

## **7. Education Bill: Briefing from the Department**

*The briefing commenced at 12.15pm.*

Mr Chris Stewart, Director of Equality and All-Ireland Division, DE provided clarification on a number of issues.

The Committee noted that it was to receive information from the Department comparing the powers of the Education and Training Inspectorate at present and its intended powers following the establishment of ESA.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to follow up on correspondence sent to the Minister for Education and the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the Education Bill and Heads of Agreement.

*The briefing ended at 12.51pm.*

## **8. Correspondence**

**8.1.** The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure regarding co-ordinated statutory Committee visits to the UK City of Culture 2013.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed due to time pressures to re-consider this issue following the completion of the Committee Stage of the Education Bill.

**8.2.** The Committee noted the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland Investing Activity Report for the Department of Education, January 2013.

**8.3.** The Committee noted a Departmental response on the January Monitoring Round and the December 2012 – Outturn and Forecast Outturn information. The Committee also noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel regarding Forecast Outturns.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to re-consider the December 2012- Outturn and Forecast Outturn information following the receipt of Departmental correspondence on DE's £5 million surrender in the January Monitoring Round.

**8.4.** The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel Committee regarding the strategic direction of future EU funding.

**8.5.** The Committee noted correspondence from an employee at Oakwood ASD Advisory Service regarding staff at special schools.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking clarification on the related policy issue – specifically the position of staff on temporary contracts or temporarily promoted following the transfer of functions from the Education and Library Boards to ESA.

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed to write to the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) for clarification.

- 8.6. The Committee noted a response from the Committee for Justice regarding school transport – Access NI checks.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Department for urgent clarification and to request a briefing on this issue.

- 8.7. The Committee noted correspondence from the Assembly European Project Manager regarding education events associated with the Republic of Ireland Presidency of the Council of the EU.

- 8.8. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual representing the Coalition for Marriage.

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

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

- 8.10. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education regarding school starting time.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking sight of the Education and Library Boards' report on the co-ordination of school days and school starting times when it becomes available.

- 8.11. The Committee noted an invitation from the Assembly Education Services to attend a 'Let's talk teaching' event.

- 8.12. The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education regarding Signature Projects.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department asking to be kept informed of progress.

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

## **9. Forward Work Programme**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the forward work programme.

## **10. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

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

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 6 February 2013 at 9:30am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.58pm.*

Mervyn Storey  
Chairperson, Committee for Education  
6 February 2013