



Northern Ireland
Assembly
Committee for Education
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 24 April 2013
The SENATE CHAMBER

Present:

Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Michaela Boyle MLA
Brenda Hale MLA
Chris Hazzard MLA
Michelle McIlveen MLA
Trevor Lunn MLA
Sean Rogers MLA
Pat Sheehan MLA

In Attendance:

Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)
Sheila Mawhinney (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Sharon McGurk (Clerical Supervisor)
Sharon Young (Clerical Officer)
Dagmar Walgraeve (Clerical Officer)
Michael Heery – Assembly Research Officer (Item 7 only)

Apologies:

Jonathan Craig MLA
Jo-Anne Dobson MLA

The meeting commenced in private session at 10.04 am.

1. Committee response on the Review of the Common Funding Scheme (CFS)

The Committee noted papers relating to the Review of the Common Funding Scheme.

Pat Sheehan joined the meeting at 10.09 am.

Brenda Hale left the meeting at 10.46 am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an Assembly Research paper on the implications for schools of the choice of different socio-economic deprivation measure including e.g. the educational attainment of mothers and the impact on the use of FSME as a measure of deprivation of the introduction of Universal Credit.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to send the revised response to the Minister on the independent review of the Common Funding Scheme.

The meeting moved into public session at 10.47 am.

2. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

3. Chairperson's Business

3.1 The Chairperson referred Members to the report of the Ministerial Advisory Group on Advancing Shared Education which was launched on Monday 22 April 2013.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite representatives of the Ministerial Advisory Group to brief the Committee on the report's recommendations.

3.2 The Chairperson drew Members' attention to the report of the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education in Scotland.

Brenda Hale rejoined the meeting at 10.48 am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that in order to inform its consideration of primary school Area Planning, a Committee visit to Scotland would be arranged to meet with the authors of the report.

3.3 The Chairperson noted details of the Committee visit, to meet the Lisburn Primary School Principals, scheduled for 2:30pm on Wednesday 24 April 2013.

4. Draft minutes of 17 April 2013

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2013 were agreed by the Committee.

5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

The Chairperson advised Members that Assembly Research had requested a later briefing slot and therefore proceeded with the Departmental briefing on the Early Years consultation.

6. Departmental Briefing on the Early Years Consultation

Departmental officials joined the meeting at 10.52 am.

Linda Wilson, Director of Families and Communities; Cathy Galway, Head of Early Years Team; Bryan Laverty, Early Years Team; and Oliver McKearney, Early Years Team briefed the Committee on responses to the Learning to Learn consultation. The Department also gave an update on the allocation of pre-school places.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking: further information on the number of schools with reception classes and the number of reception pupils in composite classes; further qualitative analysis of responses to the consultation; the Department's assessment of Early Years practices in other jurisdictions; and feedback on the Sure Start review and on the evaluation of SEN pilots, when available.

Michelle McIlveen left the meeting at 11.22 am.

Brenda Hale left the meeting at 11.22 am.

Pat Sheehan left the meeting at 11.26 am.

Sean Rogers left the meeting at 11.36 am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to both the Minister of Education and Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety regarding how their Departments interface to ensure joined-up delivery of services and how they work together in respect of the Delivering Social Change framework and the Sure Start Programme.

Departmental officials left the meeting at 11.47 am.

7. Departmental financial forecasts - Assembly Research Briefing

Assembly Research joined the meeting at 11.48 am.

A representative of Assembly Research Services briefed the Committee on Departmental financial forecasts.

Pat Sheehan rejoined the meeting at 11.50 am.

Sean Rogers rejoined the meeting at 11.58 am.

Michelle McIlveen rejoined the meeting at 12.00 pm.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Assembly Research left the meeting at 12.01 pm.

8. Departmental Briefing on Savings Delivery Plans

Departmental officials joined the meeting at 12.02 pm.

John McGrath, Deputy Secretary; Katrina Godfrey, Director of Planning and Performance Management; and Trevor Connolly, Director of Finance briefed the Committee on the Department's Saving Delivery Plans.

Michaela Boyle left the meeting at 12.02 pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward papers to the Department from the Assembly Research Briefing on Departmental financial forecasts.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Michelle McIlveen left the meeting at 12.41 pm.

Sean Rogers left the meeting at 12.51 pm.

Departmental officials left the meeting at 12.59 pm.

9. Correspondence

- 9.1. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department on the Draft Food in Schools Policy.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek a Departmental briefing on the draft policy.

- 9.2. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding an additional payment for non-teaching staff.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek an update on the payment to staff in Voluntary Grammar and GMI schools, and clarification of arrangements following the establishment of ESA.

- 9.3. The Committee noted an invitation from Barrack St Boys' PS and Nursery Unit to a graduation ceremony on 5 June 2013 at 2.00pm.

- 9.4. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding recent extreme weather conditions and the impact on student preparations for examinations.

- 9.5. The Committee noted correspondence from a concerned parent relating to a Development Proposal for St. Ita's Primary School. The Committee

noted that a recent Departmental press release advised that the Development Proposal had been accepted

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Department as requested.

- 9.6. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department on the Translink 3 for 2 Scheme; the Dungannon transportation pilot; and insurer's responsibility for transport providers.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to again suggest a revision to guidance to schools which contract their own transport providers. The Committee agreed that Departmental guidance should require schools to confirm with the insurer that insurance is in place and to ensure that contracts with private transport providers require the provider's insurers to advise the school of a termination of insurance arrangements.

- 9.7. The Committee noted an invitation from the Speaker's Office to 'Perspectives On' Centenary of Women's Suffrage Competition on Tuesday 30 April at 1.00pm in the Senate Chamber.

- 9.8. Members noted correspondence from the Department of Employment and Learning on the incorporation of Formal Coaching Qualifications into Teacher Training courses.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department enquiring as to whether it will amend the curriculum for student teachers to allow or require formal coaching qualifications to be obtained.

- 9.9. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Employment and Learning regarding an employment dispute.

- 9.10. The Committee noted correspondence from the Controlled Sectoral Support Body working group requesting an opportunity to brief the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule the briefing for 22 May 2013.

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

10. Forward Work Programme

The Committee agreed that it was content with the Forward Work Programme as drafted.

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 1 May 2013 at 10:00 am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.07 pm.

**Mervyn Storey
Chairperson, Committee for Education
1 May 2013**