



Northern Ireland
Assembly
Committee for Education
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 22 May 2013
The SENATE CHAMBER

Present:

Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Michaela Boyle 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)
Christopher McNickle (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Sharon McGurk (Clerical Supervisor)
Sharon Young (Clerical Officer)
Ursula Savage (Bursary Student)

Apologies:

Jonathan Craig MLA

The meeting commenced in closed session at 10.04 am.

1. Committee Inquiry – Terms of Reference

The Committee considered the draft Terms of Reference for an Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and the school improvement process.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to commence this Inquiry immediately after Summer Recess.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Inquiry should also focus on the measurement of the value that is added by schools and that it would give further consideration to the draft Terms of Reference at its next meeting.

Danny Kinahan joined the meeting at 10.15am.

The Committee also considered the draft Terms of Reference for an Inquiry into Integrated and Shared education.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that such an Inquiry would focus on the mechanics of Integrated and Shared Education and how both educational concepts could dovetail.

Agreed: The Committee further agreed that it would defer final agreement of the Terms of Reference for its Inquiry into Integrated and Shared Education until the Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and the school improvement process has concluded.

The meeting moved into public session at 10.29 am.

2. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

3. Chairperson's Business

3.1 The Committee considered recent press reports concerning a letter from the Secretary of State for Education to the Minister in respect of the alignment of GCSEs and GCEs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister and ask for sight of Secretary of State Gove's recent letter and for his views on the next steps for the examination systems in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to write to Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster to seek their views regarding both CCEA's review of GCSEs and A-levels and the possible development of separate A-level qualifications for England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Jo-Anne Dobson left the meeting at 10.39am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek information from Assembly Research on the Scottish Higher qualifications and on practices in Wales and England in respect of the use of Key Stage 2 outcomes to predict the profile of GCSE attainment.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to seek up-to-date statistics from Assembly Research on students who receive post-primary education in 1 jurisdiction and undertake Higher Education in another.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek information regarding the rescheduling of January A-level examinations and its future guidance and current practice in respect of students in special circumstances.

3.2 The Committee considered the Minister's recent statement on Computer Based Assessment (CBA).

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking the relevant documentation from the four part review of CBA and information on the proposed pilot scheme.

4. Draft Minutes of 15 May 2013

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2013 were agreed by the Committee.

5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

6. Briefing on Classroom Assistants and SEN inclusion

Witnesses joined the meeting at 10.50 am.

James Dillon, Communications Co-Ordinator, UNESCO Centre at the University of Ulster; Dr Ulf Hannsson, Research Associate, Children and Youth Programme, UNESCO Centre at the University of Ulster; and Dr Una O'Connor, Programme Director, Children and Youth Programme (CYP), UNESCO Centre at the University of Ulster briefed the Committee on the CYP report on classroom assistants and SEN inclusion.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Michaela Boyle declared an interest in respect of a family member who is undertaking a teaching assistance qualification.

Chris Hazzard left the meeting at 11.34am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the report to the Department for comment on the relevant recommendations.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek an update on its work on workforce planning.

Witnesses left the meeting at 11.38am

7. Briefing from the Controlled Sector Support Body – Working Group

Witnesses joined the meeting at 11.39am

Uel McCrea, Chairperson, Controlled Sector Working Group; David Canning, Member, Controlled Sector Working Group; Reverend Ian Ellis, Member, Controlled Sector Working Group; Reverend Trevor Gribben, Member, Controlled Sector Working Group; and Heather Murray, Member, Controlled Sector Working

Group briefed the Committee on progress towards the establishment of the Controlled Schools' Sectoral Support Council.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Jo-Anne Dobson returned to the meeting at 12.01pm

Chris Hazzard returned to the meeting at 12.02pm

The Chairperson declared an interest as a member of a Board of Governors of a Controlled Sector Post-Primary School.

Pat Sheehan left the meeting at 12.27pm

Brenda Hale left the meeting at 12.28pm

Chris Hazzard left the meeting at 12.41pm

Michelle McIlveen left the meeting at 12.45pm

Witnesses left the meeting at 12.45pm.

8. Correspondence

8.1 The Committee noted correspondence from Playboard regarding its annual conference.

8.2 The Committee noted correspondence from Oakgrove Integrated College regarding the Spirit of Enniskillen Trust.

8.3 The Committee noted a response from Assembly Research regarding a query on school starting age in the Republic of Ireland.

8.4 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding mutual recognition of qualifications.

8.5 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment regarding a mapping exercise of the Third Sector.

8.6 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment regarding the review of the Consumer Council Northern Ireland.

8.7 The Committee considered correspondence from Ms Lesley Hunter regarding a suggested science baseline for primary schools at primary seven.

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

8.8 The Committee noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People regarding a consultation on Shared Education.

8.9 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Health, Social Services and Public Safety regarding suicide prevention strategies.

8.10 The Committee noted correspondence from CCEA regarding the proposed changes to January A-level examinations.

9. Departmental Briefing: Levels of Progression

Officials joined the meeting at 12.47pm

Dale Heaney, Head of Assessment and Qualifications Team; David Hughes, Director of Curriculum, Qualifications and Standards; and Ruth Kennedy, Business Manager, Curriculum Assessment and Reporting, CCEA briefed the Committee on the roll out of the Levels of Progression.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Trevor Lunn left the meeting at 12.48pm

Michelle McIlveen returned to the meeting at 12.50pm

Sean Rogers left the meeting at 12.51pm

Jo-Anne Dobson left the meeting at 12.55pm

The Committee lost its decision-making quorum at 12.55pm and in accordance with Standing Order 49(5) the Committee continued to receive evidence with a quorum of four Members.

Sean Rogers re-joined the meeting at 1.01pm, the Committee regained its decision-making quorum at this time.

Danny Kinahan left the meeting at 1.01pm

The Committee lost its decision-making quorum at 1.01pm and in accordance with Standing Order 49(5) the Committee continued to receive evidence with a quorum of four Members.

Chris Hazzard re-joined the meeting at 1.02pm, the Committee regained its decision-making quorum at this time.

Michaela Boyle left the meeting at 1.03pm

The Committee lost its decision-making quorum at 1.03pm and in accordance with Standing Order 49(5) the Committee continued to receive evidence with a quorum of four Members.

Officials left the meeting at 1.14pm

10. Any Other Business

The Committee noted Michaela Boyle's thanks for the Committee's message of sympathy following the recent death of a family member.

11. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 29 May 2013 at 10:00 am in the the Senate Chamber.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.15pm.

Mervyn Storey
Chairperson, Committee for Education
29 May 2013