



Northern Ireland  
Assembly  
Committee for Education  
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 19 JUNE 2013  
Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

**Present:**

Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)  
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Michaela Boyle MLA  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Jo-Anne Dobson MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Michelle McIlveen MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**In Attendance:**

Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Christopher McNickle (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Sharon McGurk (Clerical Supervisor)  
Sharon Young (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:**

None

*The meeting commenced in public session at 10.03 am.*

**1. Apologies**

Apologies are detailed above.

**2. Chairperson's Business**

**2.1** The Committee noted the recommendations of the Inquiry by the Committee for Regional Development into the better use of public and community sector funds for the delivery of bus transport.

**Agreed:** it was agreed that the Chairperson would speak on behalf of the Committee in support of the relevant recommendations during the plenary debate on the Committee for Regional Development's Inquiry.

### 3. Draft Minutes of 12 June 2013

**Agreed:** The draft minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2013 were agreed by the Committee.

### 4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

### 5. Briefing on responses to the consultation on the General Teaching Council Northern Ireland

*Officials joined the meeting at 10.07 am.*

La'verne Montgomery, Director of Education Workforce Development, Department of Education; Miriam Miskelly, Head of Teacher Education Team, Department of Education; Sam Dempster, Teacher Education Team, Department of Education; and Christopher Andrews, Further Education Policy and Strategic Development Branch, Department for Employment and Learning briefed the Committee on responses to the consultation on the General Teaching Council Northern Ireland.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*Jo-Anne Dobson joined the meeting at 10.23am*

*Seán Rogers declared an interest as a Chair of a Board of Governors of a school.*

*Michaela Boyle joined the meeting at 11.11am*

*Jo-Anne Dobson left the meeting at 11.16am*

*Officials left the meeting at 11.19am*

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

- an update on the recent work of the Teachers' Negotiating Committee and information in respect of ongoing or unresolved issues;
- details in respect of recent changes to the Performance Review and Staff Development Scheme;
- clarification as to how the proposed legislation will deal with the registration of Further Education lecturers who are providing educational services to school pupils via the Entitlement Framework;
- information on the make-up of the elected and appointed representatives of the General Teaching Council in Scotland; and
- information on the cost of the consultation on the proposals to reform the General Teaching Council Northern Ireland.

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed to write to the General Teaching Council Northern Ireland to seek the following:

- clarification as to the numbers of teachers who are currently registered with the General Teaching Council Northern Ireland and the numbers who are in temporary, permanent, full or part time teaching posts;
- information on the current cost of registration and details in respect of proposed changes to this cost;
- clarification in respect of the General Teaching Council Northern Ireland's plans in respect of its reserves; and
- the number of cases of professional incompetence considered by the General Teaching Council Northern Ireland and the number of associated de-registrations.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the Clerk should give consideration as to how the anticipated Bill would be scrutinised by both the Committee for Education and the Committee for Employment and Learning.

## **6. Briefing from the Department on the responses to the consultation on the Draft Traveller Child in Education Framework**

*Officials joined the meeting at 11.20am*

Caroline Gillan, Director of Access, Inclusion and Well-Being, Department of Education; Fiona Stanfield, Additional Educational Needs Team, Department of Education; and Philomena McDermott, Acting Head Children and Young People's Team, Southern Education and Library Board briefed the Committee on the responses to the consultation on the Draft Traveller Child in Education Action Framework.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*Officials left the meeting at 12.01pm*

*Jo-Anne Dobson returned to the meeting at 12.01pm*

*Michelle McIlveen left the meeting at 12.01pm*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was generally supportive of the actions proposed in the Draft Action Framework. The Committee noted and welcomed the gender sensitivity in respect of certain ELB Traveller interventions. The Committee: supported in principle the establishment of the Traveller Education Support Service; welcomed the proposals to baseline attendance and roll-out an inter-Board strategy; and also endorsed action relating to the tailoring of careers guidance for Travellers.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to seek further information on:

- the review of legislation relating to school attendance for children whose parents pursue a nomadic lifestyle or who are obliged to travel for work reasons;
- the review of Traveller specific transport arrangements by schools;
- the breakdown of spending in respect of Traveller and Roma children; and
- how the Department tracks expenditure and its guidance to schools on the management of the impact on school finances and enrolment levels associated with pupils whose families pursue a nomadic lifestyle.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department setting out the above.

## 7. Briefing from Assembly research on Measures of Deprivation.

*A representative of Assembly Research joined the meeting at 12.03pm*

Caroline Perry, Assembly research Officer, briefed the Committee on her paper on measures of deprivation and the impact of Universal Credit.

*Michelle McIlveen returned to the meeting at 12.05pm*

*Michelle McIlveen left the meeting at 12.07pm*

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*Pat Sheehan left the meeting at 12.11pm*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to determine what work has been done to assess the educational benefit of the provision of free school meals.

## 8. Correspondence

**8.1** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding Healthy Eating Guidance as part of the Initial Teacher Education curriculum.

**8.2** The Committee noted correspondence from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children regarding the NSPCC Number Day.

**8.3** The Committee considered correspondence from the Department relating to a Unesco Centre report on the role of classroom assistants and its associated ongoing work with the School Workforce Review.

**8.4** The Committee also considered an update from the Department on the School Workforce Review

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to seek a briefing on the School Workforce Review.

*Pat Sheehan returned to the meeting at 12.19pm*

**8.5** The Committee considered correspondence from the Department regarding the operation of Nurture Units and confirmation that they do not currently form part of the Early Years provision.

**8.6** The Committee also considered correspondence from the Northern Ireland Nurture Group Network suggesting that the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister should continue the funding for existing Nurture Groups which were unsuccessful under the Signature Project.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister endorsing this suggestion from the Northern Ireland Nurture Group Network.

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed to write to the Department and suggest that it reconsider the selection criteria for Nurture groups under the Signature Project.

**8.7** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding the Schools Model Disposal and Retention Schedule timescales for child protection information.

**8.8** The Committee considered correspondence from the Department regarding the initial appointment process to the Board of the Education and Skills Authority.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to advise that it believed that initial appointments to the Board of the Education and Skills Authority should comply with the Commissioner for Public Appointment's Code of Conduct.

**8.9** The Committee considered correspondence from the Department regarding the absence of rural-proofing training for staff involved in Area Planning.

The Committee noted its disappointment that the Department does not require rural-proofing training for staff involved in Area Planning.

**8.10** The Committee considered correspondence from the Department regarding the on-going review of Teacher Education including a review of Teacher Professional Development.

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

**8.11** The Committee considered correspondence from the Department regarding a suggested baseline for science and technology learning at Primary seven.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Royal Society of Chemistry and to the Association of Science Education for a response.

**8.12** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of the Environment regarding an update on its work in relation to buffer zones around schools where restrictions would be placed on the operation of fast food outlets.

**8.13** The Committee noted correspondence from the Replay Theatre Company which enclosed a copy of the BLISS project DVD.

**8.14** The Committee noted correspondence from the Southern Education and Library Board regarding the June Monitoring Round.

**8.15** The Committee noted correspondence from CCEA regarding Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar assessment at GCSE and additional support for children with dyslexia.

**8.16** The Committee considered correspondence from the Department regarding a Committee request for an urgent briefing on Orangefield High School.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the Belfast Education and Library Board and the South Eastern Education and Library Board would, in the first instance, brief the Committee on policy issues relating to the proposed transfer of staff and pupils of Orangefield High School.

*Jonathan Craig left the meeting at 12.22pm*

**8.17** The Committee considered correspondence from St Dominic's High School regarding feedback on the Levels of Progression. The Committee noted with some concern the issues raised in respect of the Levels of Progression.

**8.18** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding the Delivering Social Change Signature Project and the restriction of the new posts to teachers graduating after 2010.

**8.19** The Committee considered correspondence from the Consensus for Post Primary Education regarding a request to brief the Committee on a proposed educational village in Armagh.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Consensus for Post Primary Education to seek further information on the proposed Armagh educational village.

**8.20** The Committee considered a tabled paper from the Department relating to G8 exam disruption.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to CCEA to seek a summary of the extent of exam disruption during the G8 summit and to also seek an update on recent examination paper errors and the impact on students in Northern Ireland.

## **9. Forward Work Plan**

The Chairperson informed Members that further to the First Stage of the Public Service Pensions Bill on Monday 17 June 2013, the Committee for Finance and Personnel had asked statutory Committees to consider evidence on this Bill and to respond to the Committee for Finance and Personnel before the end of September.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to arrange a briefing with the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council and the Department to discuss the Bill in September 2013.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek further information on the timescales for Peace IV bids relevant to education.

*Jonathan Craig returned to the meeting at 12.39pm*

The Committee considered its Inquiry into the Education Training Inspectorate and the school improvement process.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to commence oral evidence-taking on this Inquiry in October 2013.

The Chairperson informed Members that a draft press release regarding the Committee's Inquiry into the Education Training Inspectorate and the school improvement process will be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

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

## **10. Any Other Business**

There was no other business

## **11. Date, time and place of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 25 June 2013 at 10:30 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.47pm.*

**Mervyn Storey**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Education**  
**25 June 2013**