



Northern Ireland
Assembly
Committee for Education
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
MONDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2013
SENATE CHAMBER

Present:

Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)
Danny Kinahan (Deputy Chairperson)
Michaela Boyle MLA
Jonathan Craig MLA
Chris Hazzard MLA
Trevor Lunn MLA
Stephen Moutray MLA
Robin Newton MLA
Seán Rogers MLA
Pat Sheehan MLA

In Attendance:

Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)
Karen Jardine (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Sharon McGurk (Clerical Supervisor)
Sharon Young (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Jo-Anne Dobson MLA

The meeting commenced in private session at 1.03pm.

1. Procedural Advice

Members considered further requests for submissions to the Committee's Inquiry on the Education and Training Inspectorate and the School Improvement process to be treated in a confidential manner.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content to generally accept confidential submissions to the Inquiry when requested with relevant oral evidence taken in private; information that could identify witnesses removed from the report; and any Hansard proceedings redacted accordingly.

The meeting moved to public session at 1.06pm

2. Apologies

Apologies were as indicated above.

3. Draft Minutes of 18 September 2013 and 25 September 2013

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2013 were agreed by the Committee.

Agreed: The minutes of the meetings held on 25 September 2013 were agreed by the Committee.

4. Matters Arising

4.1 The Chairperson referred Members to correspondence from the Department relating to the consultation on the Common Funding Scheme, including a copy of the Equality Impact Assessment document; and noted that the EQIA consultation is to conclude at the end of November 2013.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister to seek an extension to the timescale for the consultation on the Common Funding Scheme, to coincide with the conclusion of the EQIA consultation at the end of November.

4.2 The Chairperson referred Members to a draft invitation letter along with a proposed list of schools and stakeholders in relation to the planned Committee Common Funding Scheme event on Wednesday 6 November.

Agreed: Members agreed to forward to the Clerk suggestions of other schools which could be invited to the stakeholder event, with a view to ensuring reasonable representation across Board areas and sectors. The Committee agreed the text of an invitation letter to schools and stakeholders.

4.3 Following the recent plenary debate on Free School Meals Entitlement, the Committee considered previous papers relating to Free School Meals and its use as a measure of poverty and discussed the possibility of commissioning further research on the subject.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk would bring appropriate terms of reference for a further piece of external research on Free School Meals for consideration at a future meeting.

5. Correspondence

5.1 The Committee noted correspondence from the Southern Education and Library Board regarding the regrading of SEN Classroom Assistants.

5.2 The Committee noted a response from the Department of the Environment regarding information on fines and prosecutions in respect of buses and taxis in respect of insurance.

5.3 The Committee noted a response from the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety regarding the provision of Arts-Based Projects in Special Schools.

5.4 The Committee noted a request for information from the Integrated Education Fund, relating to Hazelwood Integrated College.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that no further action would be taken at this time as this matter is the subject of active legal proceedings.

5.5 The Committee noted correspondence from the Office of the Speaker regarding the presentation to the Assembly of a Public Petition relating to Hazelwood Integrated College.

5.6 The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding a proposed Stakeholder Event on Wednesday 15 November 2013, relating to the Delivering Social Change Signature Projects.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department and request a written briefing on the Delivering Social Change Signature Project and also to invite relevant Departmental officials to attend.

5.7 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department giving notice of the Minister's statement on the review of GCSEs and A-levels.

5.8 The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Education on the tragic death of Ben Robinson and the development of new guidance for sport in schools.

5.9 The Committee noted correspondence from the Voice of Young People in Care (VOYPIC) regarding the findings of its report 'Our Life in Care'.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department and ask for a response to the relevant recommendations within the report.

5.10 The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding the Food in Schools Policy.

5.11 The Committee noted 'Newsletter 5' from the Controlled Schools Sectoral Support Body Working Group.

5.12 The Committee noted correspondence from Victoria Park Primary School highlighting concerns relating to the delays to the start of a new school build.

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

5.13 The Committee noted tabled correspondence from Professor Tony Gallagher regarding suggestions for the use of additional education funding should it become available.

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

6. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered its draft Forward Work Programme.

Members noted that the Chief Executive of the Belfast Education and Library Board has indicated she is unavailable to attend the Committee as requested on Wednesday 9 October.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to carry on the briefing on 9 October as scheduled with Gavin Boyd.

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

7. Any Other Business

Members noted that at the next meeting of the Committee greater use would be made of the Electronic Committee Pack system.

A number of Members indicated that they no longer wished to receive paper packs.

8. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 9 October 2013 at 10:00 am in the Senate Chamber.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.24pm.

Mervyn Storey
Chairperson, Committee for Education
9 October 2013