



Northern Ireland  
Assembly  
Committee for Education  
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 23 OCTOBER 2013  
SENATE CHAMBER

**Present:**

Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)  
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jo-Anne Dobson MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Stephen Moutray MLA  
Robin Newton 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:** Jonathan Craig MLA, Michaela Boyle MLA, Seán Rogers MLA and Trevor Lunn MLA.

*The meeting commenced in public session at 10.07am.*

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were as indicated above.

**2. Chairperson's Business**

**2.1** The Chairperson noted with grave concern disruption to local schools as a consequence of recent bomb scares.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to each of the recently affected schools to express its concerns and revulsion that school life had been disrupted in this way.

**2.2** The Chairperson referred Members to the recent statement by the Minister of Finance and Personnel on capital reallocations associated with the delays to the A5 project. Members noted that while other Committees had received briefings from their departments on the associated bidding process, the Department of Education had provided no information to the Committee on this subject.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department: requesting an explanation as to why it had not briefed the Committee with regard to capital reallocations; seeking further information in respect of the United Communities Projects; and the reported 'freeing up of £6m from the DE baseline'.

**2.3** The Chairperson referred Members to the 'Advancing Shared Education' statement made by the Minister of Education on Tuesday 22 October 2013.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Minister to seek an assurance that the Area Planning process will dovetail with the roll-out of Shared Education and to ask that it be advised of the timeline for implementation of the recommendations accepted by the Minister and the process of further consideration in respect of the other recommendations.

### **3. Draft Minutes of 16 October 2013**

**Agreed:** The minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2013 were agreed by the Committee.

### **4. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **5. Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and School Improvement Process - Written summary of responses**

The Committee noted a summary of the written responses to-date to the Committee's Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and the School Improvement Process.

### **6. Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and School Improvement Process - Oral Evidence from the General Teaching Council NI**

*The following witnesses from the General Teaching Council NI joined the meeting at 10.18am:*

Dr Carmel Gallagher, Registrar, General Teaching Council NI; Gerry Devlin, Senior Education Officer, General Teaching Council NI; Colm Davis, Principal, Tor Bank School; and Sharon Beattie, Principal, Dromore Nursery.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session. The evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

*Jo-Anne Dobson joined the meeting at 10.41am.*

*Robin Newton joined the meeting at 10.57am.*

*The witness, Colm Davis, left the meeting at 11.23am.*

*Jo-Anne Dobson left the meeting at 11.35am.*

*Danny Kinahan left the meeting at 11.53am.*

*The remaining witnesses left at 11.56am.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to GTCNI requesting a copy of the questionnaire that it has recently circulated to teachers seeking views on the school inspection process and a summary of the responses to the questionnaire once this information is available.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to investigate the possibility of a meeting with Pasi Sahlberg (chairperson of the review panel of education experts appointed by the Minister for Employment and Learning to take forward the review of teacher training infrastructure in Northern Ireland) to discuss the Finnish educational experience.

*Chris Hazzard left the meeting at 11.57am.*

*Pat Sheehan left the meeting at 11.57am.*

*Robin Newton left the meeting at 11.57am.*

*As there was no longer a quorum, proceedings were suspended at 11.57am.*

*The meeting resumed at 12.02pm with the following Members present:*

*Mervyn Storey; Chris Hazzard; Stephen Moutray; Robin Newton; and Pat Sheehan.*

## **7. Inquiry into the Education and Training Inspectorate and School Improvement Process - Oral evidence from INTO, NASUWT, UTU and ATL**

*The following witnesses from INTO, NASUWT, UTU and ATL joined the meeting at 12.02pm:*

Nuala O'Donnell, Registrar, Senior Official, INTO; Karen Sims, Policy/Casework Official, NASUWT; Avril Hall-Callaghan, General Secretary, UTU; and Mark Langhammer, Director, ATL.

*Danny Kinahan returned to the meeting at 12.03pm.*

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session. The evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

*Pat Sheehan left the meeting at 12.50pm.*

*The witnesses left the meeting at 12.53pm.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to NITC to request an update in respect of its review of the school inspection process and a copy of the NITC paper on the School Workforce Review.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request the following information:

- an update on a reported planned review of the ETI complaints procedure;
- clarification in respect of suggestions that complaints against individual ETI inspectors do not lead to retraining or disciplinary measures but result in the relevant inspector simply being moved; and
- information on the advice issued to inspectors during the INTO industrial action which ceased in 2012; the impact on inspections at that time; and the ongoing consequences.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request further information from Assembly Research on Parent Councils in Scotland.

## **8. Written Briefing - Assembly Research**

The Committee noted a paper from Assembly Research entitled 'Linear and modular examinations internationally, and the portability of qualifications across jurisdictions'.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to note the paper (and the associated public domain correspondence from the Secretary of State for Education) and to revisit the issue following the conclusion of the Department's consultation on the report regarding GCSEs and A-Levels.

The Committee noted a second paper from Assembly Research entitled 'Joint Working across DE and DHSSPS strategies'.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to note the paper, and to follow up on Education and Health service access following the conclusion of the Committee's Inquiry into the Education and Training and Inspectorate and School Improvement process.

## **9. Correspondence**

**9.1** The Committee noted a response from the Department on suggestions from Professor Tony Gallagher on how potential additional funds, arising from an announcement regarding free schools meals by the Coalition Government, might be used.

**9.2** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department in response to Committee queries regarding a statutory baseline for science in primary schools.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that its STEM event, planned for January 2014, would inform a mini-inquiry on this issue and would lead to the publication of a short Committee report and possible plenary debate.

**9.3** The Committee noted an invitation from the Prince's Trust to attend the 'Samsung Celebrate Success Awards' taking place on Friday 15 November 2013 at the MAC in Belfast.

**9.4** The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Education highlighting the publication of the policy document and consultation report 'Priorities for Youth'.

**9.5** The Committee noted a response from Department regarding the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister event on Delivering Social Change Signature Projects, including update information.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward the information to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department and request that it be kept updated on the evaluation of both of the relevant Delivering Social Change Signature Projects.

**9.6** The Committee noted a response from the Department on its review of the Early Years Fund.

**9.7** The Committee noted correspondence from St. Francis of Assisi Primary School, Castleberg to CCMS relating to a consultation on closure.

**9.8** The Committee noted correspondence from Priory Integrated College.

**9.9** The Committee noted a response from CCMS to a query on the Area Planning consultation process.

**9.10** The Committee noted a response from the Department following a query regarding progress on the Victoria Park Primary School new build.

**9.11** The Committee noted an invitation from the NI Schools and Colleges Careers Association (NISCA) to the Autumn Careers Conference on 28 November 2013.

**9.12** The Committee noted correspondence from a concerned parent-governor from Academy Primary School, Saintfield regarding the consultation on proposals to reform the Common Funding Scheme.

**9.13** The Committee noted a copy of the response from St. Bernard's Primary School to the Department's consultation on proposals to reform the Common Funding Scheme.

**9.14** The Committee noted correspondence relating to the Big Green Fox organisation which offers careers guidance advice in schools, which had been forwarded by the Committee for Employment and Learning.

**9.15** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department providing an update on applications to the Schools Enhancement Programme.

**9.16** The Committee noted correspondence from the Department for Employment and Learning on the recent OECD International Survey of Adult Skills for NI.

**9.17** The Committee noted in tabled papers a response from the Committee for Employment and Learning regarding its Inquiry into Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance.

The Committee noted that a link to all of the written submissions to the CEIAG Inquiry had been circulated to Members.

## **10. Forward Work Programme**

**10.1** The Committee considered the draft Forward Work Programme.

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

**10.2** The Chairperson advised Members that the Committee's event on the Common Funding Scheme, scheduled for Wednesday 6 November 2013 now has around 50 confirmed attendees. The Chairperson further advised that on Tuesday 22 October 2013 he met with representatives from PTA-NI, who requested that they be involved in the event.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to extend the invitation to the Common Funding Scheme event to PTA-NI, to allow views from parents from different parts of Northern Ireland who educate their children in a number of sectors to be heard.

The Chairperson also advised Members that representatives from ASCL were now also available to attend the event on 6 November 2013.

**10.3** The Committee noted the inclusion in the recent CCEA report on GCSEs and A-levels of information on the Republic of Ireland's examination and assessment system.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to give further consideration to a Committee visit to the Republic of Ireland involving the Oireachtas Education Committee during which issues of mutual interest might be explored. The Committee further agreed that to this end, the Clerk should circulate relevant information to Members.

## **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 6 November 2013 at 10:00 am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.07pm.*

**Mervyn Storey**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Education**  
**23 October 2013**